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THE SOMERSETSHIRE DIALECT :

ITS PRONUNCIATION.

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THE
SOMERSETSHIRE DIALECT:
ITS PRONUNCIATION.

TWO PAPERS

READ BEFORE THE

Archæological Society of Somersetshire,

BY

T. SPENCER BAYNES.

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THE
SOMERSETSHIRE DIALECT:
ITS PRONUNCIATION.

CERTAINLY few subjects more interesting or important can be proposed to the Archæological Society of a county than its dialect. For if Archæology be, as I presume it is, the science of unwritten history, having for its main object the interpretation of the past—and that not so much through doubtful and often legendary documents, but rather by means of material records—having for its object in that way the interpretation of the past—it must necessarily find in language some of the richest materials for its purpose. This is now pretty generally understood, and Philology is beginning to assume its true position as the indispensable handmaid of History. Within a comparatively recent period we have seen one of its greatest triumphs,—the early history of a great and famous people wholly re-written through its instrumentality. The early history of Rome, as you well know, was actually discovered, recon-

structed, and rewritten by Niebuhr, through the study of its antiquities, and mainly the archaic element of the language. The written records of the historians who had undertaken to preserve and transmit the early annals of their country had to be thrown aside as little better than legends, and their place supplied by the eloquent, the more authentic, minute, and complete, though unconscious, testimony of the language itself. And what is thus true of the language of a country in general,—the national tongue,—is pre-eminently true of its provincial dialects, in which the archaic element of speech is best preserved. This archaic element, moreover, is of special value in our own country, from the piecemeal way in which it was originally peopled, or rather occupied,—by successive incursions from the opposite coast, of various tribes, each belonging, indeed, to the same stock, but representing for the most part a different family, with marked peculiarities of its own. These peculiarities were naturally impressed on the spot in which the invaders settled, and in many cases traces of them are to be found there still. The natural boundaries between these settlements were often slight enough—a low range of hills, a narrow valley, or an insignificant stream; but, slight though they were, these marks were sufficient to determine an original difference of occupation recognizable by a peculiarity of dialect even at the present time. It will be seen at once, then, how rich in the materials of history these provincial dialects must be; and it is, therefore, most important that some of the care, labour, and atten-

tion, we bestow on the material and mechanical remains of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors should be extended to the vital, the living traces of their presence yet to be found amongst us in the habits and language of the common people. We willingly spend time, and money too, in visiting the ruined architecture of a religious house, even though it may not date beyond the Decorated or Early English period ; if there are genuine Norman remains, our curiosity is increased in proportion; and if a genuine Saxon ruin existed in the county, I believe every member of the society would wish to see it, and find out all he could about its history. There is thus little want of zeal in this direction. In respect to the more interesting remains of ecclesiastical architecture, indeed, we are not content with a mere visit ; we take their measurements, describe them accurately, and sketch or photograph the ruined door-way, before time destroys the lizard's tail, the lion's head, or griffin's claws, still visible in rude but graphic sculpture on the mouldering stone ; but the rustic in the adjoining field who stops his plough in mid-furrow, and gazes on the antiquarian and artist at their work, says to his fellow, "Thic 'ool make a purty pictur' drafted out —thic 'ool ;" or looking over your shoulder, expresses his wonder and admiration after his own fashion, "Daizy me ! that beäts all ; if that beänt the vurry pleäace issull—look at the zun an' zsheeäde dro' the door-waye, and the kexes and pixy-stools in the grass, and the evet on the white stane, I zim I zees un hirn." Of him we take no account ; but in many respects he is really a far

more curious archaeological specimen than the ruin at his side. If we could only photograph that man's mind, his way of thinking and feeling, his notions of things, his accent, pronunciation, and vocabulary, we should get at some very striking facts, and possess ourselves of rich archaeological materials. For rude and ignorant clown as we know him to be, he is nevertheless an authentic document of older times, a living epistle from our Anglo - Saxon forefathers, a volume of ancient history, bound, sometimes perhaps in cloth, more commonly in leather, most commonly of all in duck and corduroy ; one, however, that it is important we should read without delay. It is thus urgent because it is clear that we shall not be able to keep the volume long. I am most anxious that every sentence, if possible every syllable, of that living epistle should be deciphered at once, because we cannot help seeing that we shall soon lose it altogether. The whole tendency of modern life, of modern improvements and modern progress, is to obliterate these archaic remains of other men and older manners—these picturesque provincial peculiarities. Railways and telegraphs, machinery and steam, the schoolmaster and the press, will soon sweep the last living trace of the Saxon and the Dane out of the land. The time-honoured agricultural labourer will by-and-by become almost as great a myth as Thor, or Odin, or Wayland Smith. From present appearances and tendencies, indeed, it is not improbable that he may be resolved into a rural stoker. We plough by machinery, we sow by machinery, we reap by machinery, we

thresh by machinery ; and if all these machines are not yet worked by steam, it may be taken for granted they soon will be. Already there are steam ploughs and steam flails, and steam drills and reaping-hooks will no doubt soon follow ; and whether they do or no, whether the labourer really becomes a stoker or not, it is clear that, with such a revolution going on, he will soon lose his present character and habits. I am not here to deplore that inevitable change ; far from it, for I hope, that what the peasant loses as a Saxon he will gain as a man. I simply urge it as a motive to activity, that we should gain all that is valuable before the change comes ; that since the rustics in our villages and hamlets are still rich in the materials of provincial archaeology, while at the same time every day diminishes the store, we should secure all they have to give us without delay.

I am glad, therefore, to have an opportunity of directing your attention to the subject, and in doing so shall confine myself at present to the *pronunciation* of the dialect, leaving its *vocabulary* for future consideration. At the outset, however, I may mention to you (in strict confidence) as in part explaining the course I am about to pursue, that when the committee asked me to take up the subject, they intimated at the same time—also in confidence, of course—that they wished to make these meetings more free and conversational than heretofore, and, if possible, to introduce an element of discussion into them ; and that to this end it would, perhaps, be well if I could manage to say some things that might be easily contradicted. I

fancy they felt that the subject was rather a dry one, as it really is, and it would be all the better if it could be flavoured with a spice of paradox ; that as a celebrated French monarchy was wittily said to be an “absolute despotism tempered with epigrams,” so the absolute dullness natural to the subject might be tempered with paradox and contradiction. I think the suggestion a valuable one, and being anxious to meet the views of the committee as far as possible, I propose to undertake a defence of the Somersetshire pronunciation. You all know that this is commonly regarded as rough and uncouth in the extreme. Jennings, writing on the subject thirty years ago, said, the dialect was “generally reckoned very harsh and inharmonious.” It is identified with everything that is rude and clumsy in rustic life, and has, in fact, done very heavy duty as the representative of the clownish element in literature. If the character of a coarse and brutal proprietor is to be drawn, the V’s and Z’s were called into requisition, and *Squire Western* appears talking very genuine Zoomerzet. Is a clown in a lower walk of life wanted ? *Hob senior* and *Hob junior* play at see-saw with *zeed* and *zawed* throughout the quaint comedy of *Hob in the Well*. Even the late Professor Wilson—the “Christopher North” of Blackwood—when he sketches an English rustic, makes him come from “vamous Zoomerset - Sheer ;” and the poetical clodhopper in *Punch* is manifestly from the same county. In this way it has become identified with everything that is coarse and clownish. In opposition to this view I propose to illustrate—that

the pronunciation peculiar to Somersetshire, instead of being harsh and discordant, is remarkably smooth and easy, I might almost say musical; and that, far from being, as it is commonly represented to be, vulgar and corrupt, it is, on the contrary, pre-eminently pure and classical. This, I think, is sufficiently extreme, and I shall be very happy if I can succeed in tempting members of the society into a discussion of the subject.

Now, in order to decide this question of roughness or smoothness, softness or hardness, we must look mainly to the *characteristic consonants* of the dialect, since these rather than the vowels determine its character in this respect. As Grimm tells us, vowels are the fleeting, flowing element of sound, consonants the stable. Consonants are thus the thews and sinews, bones and muscles, of language, which give it form, definite outline, and individual character, the vowels being little more than breath and colour. Nevertheless they must not be neglected, for, if they are the fleeting, fluent element of sound, it follows that, where they abound, the language will tend to become free, flowing, and musical in its pronunciation. We see this in the Italian, which has more vowel-sounds in proportion to the consonants—altogether a richer vowel element, and is at the same time more musical than any other language. This is aptly put by old Camden, who, speaking of the Italian, says,—“It is sweet and pleasant, but without sinews, as a still, fleeting water;” by which he means that it is far richer in vowel-sounds than consonantal ones. It is “without sinews,” as

having few consonants ; but “sweet and pleasant” from its abundant vowels. Now what is the position of the Somersetshire dialect in this respect ? It will be found, on examination, that it is exceedingly rich in vowel-sounds : that, in fact, the one great principle of its vowel-system is *the increase and multiplication of these sounds*. It constantly tends to make close vowels open ; long vowels short ; pure words mixed ; single vowels double vowels, diphthongs, and even triphthongs.

The vowels are lengthened and opened in such words as the following, for example—*hond* and *voote*, for hand and foot—*dorke* and *lorke*, for dark and lark—*bade* and *dade*, for bed and dead.

We have mixed and double vowels in words like—*haye*, *daye*, *maye*, *zaye*, for hay, day, may, say ; *maaid* for maid, *plaaine* for plain, *cauld* for cold, *auver* for over, &c. An immense number of words that are monosyllables in common English are, in the Somersetshire dialect, converted into dissyllables by this broadening and opening of the vowel-sound. The following are a few examples :—

Bee-ast = beast	Mee-adē = mead (mea-
Clee-an = clean	Mee-ate = meat [dow)
Chee-ase = cheese	Mee-olk = milk
Chee-ars = chairs	Noo-an = none
Kee-ar = care	Nee-ad = need
Kee-ard = card	Shee-ape = sheep
Kee-art = cart	Zee-adē = seed
Kee-ave = calf	Zee-ape = sap
Gee-ame = game	Vroo-ast = frost
Gee-ate = gate	Vi-er = fire
Hee-art = heart	Boo-ath = both, &c.

This change in the vowels may be illustrated by a verse from Jennings' "*Good buye ta thee, Cot:*"—

"Good *buye* ta thee, cot ! whaur tha *dayze* o' my *cheuldhood*
 Glaw'd bright as tha *zun* in a mornin' o' *maye* ;
 When the dum'ledores hummin, *creaped* out o' tha cob-wall,
 And *sheakin'* ther whings, tha *vleeade vooath* and *awaye*."

An extract from a recent number of *Punch*, though not very correct Somerset, will also illustrate this:—

"Now tell me, JOHN TROTTER, wha'st laughin' about?
 Ever since thee'st come whoame, thee'st kep bustin' out :
 What is't thee hast yeer'd, mun, or what hast thee zeeun ;
 JOHN, tell us what keeapes thee so broad on the grin ?

Well there, then, old ooman, the truth I 'ool speeake,
 I'll tell thee what 'tis meeaks my zides for to sheeake,
 The rummest thing ever you yeearde in your life,
 As any man truly med zaye to his wife.

Steppun into the Bull as I keeame by just now,
 I zee SIMON TANNER, and he zede as how,
 Up in Lunnun there was for to be sich a go !
 I zaye, lass, what'st think of a Prize Baby Show ?

Vor sheeame, JOHN, to talk zo !—a Baby Show !—where ?
 Among the wild beeasties at Bartlemy Vair ?
 I yeearde that was done for, and Smithfield likewise ;
 I doubt, JOHN, thee tell'st me a passle o' lies.

Well, then, JOHN, I zaye 'tis a zin and a sheeame,
 And sitch mothers as they be beeant worthy the neeame."

Not only, however, does the dialect abound in long vowels and diphthongs, it has a number of genuine triphthongs also. The English language has very few of these, even to the eye, that is in spelling (like *beauty*, for instance); and not more than one or two, if any, to the ear, that is in pronunciation. But they are by no means rare in the

Somersetshire dialect. Take the following short dialogue, for example :—

“ Whur bist *guaine* ? ”

“ Whoame, to vetch vayther’s *quoat*. ”

“ Make heeaste, there’s a good *buoy*. Zee if the keetle *buoils*, and tak keear of the *quoat*. ”

Here there are at least
four triphthongs—

Guaine— <i>uai</i> .
Quoat— <i>ua</i>
Buoy— <i>uoy</i> .
Buoile— <i>uo</i> .

The combination *uoy* only exists in one word in English—*buoy*, a float ; and there it is not sounded ; but *boy*, a child, is always sounded in Somersetshire just as *buoy*, a float, is spelt.

This is not all, however. There is a class of English words beginning with a couple of vowels, where the two are made to do duty for one, and thus represent only a single vowel-sound. But in Somersetshire both are fully sounded by prefixing or giving to the first the semi-vowel sound of Y. Take the word *eat*, for instance. Here *ea* represents the single vowel-sound of long E, *eat*—*eet*, or *ete*. But the Somersetshire man is not content to lose his vowels in this way ; he is far too fond of them, and determines therefore to retain both, which he does by prefixing, or rather giving, to the first the semi-vowel sound of Y, and *eat* accordingly becomes *yēat*. This may be illustrated by an extract from two short dialogues lately published, which, though by no means uniformly happy in representing the dialect, seize a few words well enough, amongst others the one in question :—

Farmer without, driving the ducks from the garden.

Farmer. Shew!—shew!—geet out!—geet out! I wish zomebody would zsteal thic old woman's dukes! She never gives them nothing to *yeat*, and then they comes routing about in the garden, and *yeating* up all bevore 'em.

Wife. Drat those dukes! they be zuch zilly cratures! They can't come in the garden and zstuff thursulls quietly, but they must begin quack, quack, quacking! And then old man hears 'em, and turns 'em out; zo thic's all they geet by their talking.

Farmer (as he comes in). Thic pigs must be turned out o' the orchard. The wind ha'e blown the apples down, and they be *yeating* away as never was.

Visitor. Without having asked your permission.

Farmer. O eze; they never does do that. Thic pig at the back o' the houze won't touch 'em tho'.

Visitor. Are they all of the same family?

Farmer. Eze, *he* be their mother.

Visitor. What an immense size, farmer, that pig is! She is nearly as large as a donkey, and seems quite choking with fat.

Farmer. He vat! why he beant haif a pig. I wou'dn't gi'e a penny vor zuch a pig as he. We'd *yeat* he up in vive weeks if he was made in bacon.

The following are other examples of the same process:—

Yee-ast = east

Yee-arn = earn

Yee-ath = earth

Yee-arly = early

The same takes place in words with the aspirate prefixed, the aspirate giving place to the semi-vowel Y—e.g.:—

Yee-ate = heat ("can you catch *yeat* to-day?")

Yee-ard = heard

Yee-adé = head.

This last word may be illustrated by the story of "Old Barnzo":

"Everybody knows old Barnzo as wecars his *yee-ade* a one zide. One night a waz a' comin' whoame from market, and vell off's hoss into the road, a wuz zo drunk. Zome chaps coming by, picked 'um up, and zeein' his *yee-ade* wuz all a' one zide, they thought 'twas out o' jint, and began to pull'n into 's plee-ace again, when the auld *bouy* roared out—'*Barn zo* [born so] I tell 'e!' Zo a woz allus called old Barnzo ever aterwards."

The same tendency is seen in many words having only *one* vowel, but that a *long one*—e.g. :

Yee-ale = ale.	}	arm = earm = yee-arm.
Yee-arm = arm.		
Yee-abel = Abel.		
Yee-aels = ells.		

A similar process takes place in regard to other initial vowels, but enough has already been said to illustrate this part of the subject.

You will thus see how the whole characteristic tendency of the dialect is, in this way, to broaden and multiply the vowel-sounds ; and thus to make the pronunciation more smooth and fluent.

I will now turn to the *consonants*, where, if this tendency really exists, it must become still more apparent. You will remember that consonantal sounds are divided into various kinds, according to the different organs of speech chiefly active in their production, such as *lip-and-teeth sounds*—*tongue-and-palate sounds*, &c., and that each kind of sound is represented by two consonants, one hard, the other soft, e.g., the lip-and-teeth sounds V and F—V being the soft sound of F,

F the hard sound of V ; so with the tongue-and-palate sounds, D, T, &c. We are, thus furnished with an accurate and sufficient test by which to determine the hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness, of a given tongue. Now, how does the Somersetshire dialect stand affected by this test ? I will venture to say, that all that is peculiarly characteristic in its system of consonants may be explained on the one principle, *of choosing a smooth consonant rather than a rough one, a soft rather than a hard one.* In illustration of this I will take four classes of consonants, beginning with those in which this tendency is least seen, and going on to those where it is most strikingly manifested.

First of all take G and K. These are throat-sounds, K being hard, G soft ; but there is this to be said about them, that, being throat-sounds, and thus less agreeable than most others, there is a natural tendency to soften and suppress both. G is softened at the beginning of such words as the following : *guaine*—going ; *gee-ame*—game ; *gee-ate*—gate. Here the broadening of the vowel-sound tends to soften the initial consonant, so that it becomes quite a weak breathing. At the end of words, as a general rule, but especially of words ending in NG, the G goes out altogether—*e.g.* :

Courtin = courting	Doomplin = dumpling
Weddin = wedding	Puddun = pudding
Varden = farthing	Marnin = morning.

You may have instances innumerable of this any Saturday on going early to market, in the greetings

flying about from one bustling market-woman to another—"Marnin s'marnin,—Vine marnin s'marnin,—How be s'marnin?" K is softened in the same way as G—by increasing the vowel-sound—at the beginning of such words as these:—

Quoat for coat	Quine for corner
Quoin — coin	Quoit — coit.

In *cuckoo*, and a few other words, it is softened to G, *cuckoo* being universally pronounced *gookoo*. There are not many cases of its being softened or excluded at the end of a word. Pulman, however, in his "Rustic Sketches," says that the word *pickaxe* is always pronounced "pickass," in which case the K has gone out altogether.

I will pass on to a more characteristic pair of consonants—*the tongue-and-palate sounds D and T*—D, of course, being soft, T hard. There is a strong tendency in the dialect to soften T to D—e.g.:—

Bedder for better	Liddle for little
Budder—butter	Nodis—notice
Beeädle—beetle	Maddick—mattock
Boddum—bottom	Cuddy—cutty (wren).

Pulman, in some verses on "Summer," says:—

"Th' vlowers all bright an' gay
Wi' zwit pervume da seeynt th' air,
An' th' wopse and buddervly da share
Their zwitness dru th' day."

Not only, however, is the hard T thus softened to D, the *still harder TH is often changed to D also*. TH is a tongue-and-teeth sound, and there is, as you know (though unrepresented by any difference of letter) a hard and a soft sound of TH. The great

majority of English words beginning with these letters have the hard sound ; but this is almost unknown in Somersetshire. Indeed I doubt whether it exists at all, for I think it will be found that the genuine natives always tend to give to such words as *thank*, *think*, *thing*, the soft sound instead of the hard. This is, indeed, to be expected, for the greater includes the less, and I am now about to show that there is a strong tendency to soften the hard TH not only into the soft TH, but into the still softer D — e.g. :

Droo = through	Drash = thrash
Dree = three	Drashel = threshold
Dirsh = thrush	Drooäte = throat
Dreaten = threaten	Varden = farthing.
Drow = throw	

Squire Western says, when the fair Sophia rebels against the husband of his choice—the precious Blifil, you will remember—"I won't gee her a happney, not the twentieth part of a brass *varden*." This word *varden* is rather a curious one. Out of the six original consonants only two remain, and the changes thus effected represent three characteristic tendencies of the dialect—the softening of F to V, of TH to D, and the rejection of the final G.

A still more characteristic pair of consonants comes now to be considered,—the *lip-and-teeth sounds V and F*. The substitution of V for F is one of the two notorious marks of the Somersetshire dialect, by which it is known and recognised all the world over, the other being the change of S

to Z. I may here notice a rather strange remark which Jennings makes of these changes. Opposing the general notion that the dialect is inharmonious, he says,—“ Except in its frequent and unpleasant use of Z for S, and V for F, I do not think it will be found so deficient in agreeable sounds as has been commonly supposed,”— which, as these are almost the only consonantal peculiarities he notices, is really very like saying, “ except in its chief characteristics,” &c.—rather a serious, in fact, utterly suicidal exception to make, when the object in view is to establish something about the very dialect thus characterised. If V and Z really were more harsh and disagreeable sounds than F and 'S, it would be difficult, indeed, to prove that the dialect was characteristically smooth and easy. The reverse, however, is, of course, the fact, V and Z being the softened sound of F and S respectively.

The softening of F into V at the beginning of a word is all but universal in the dialect. The following short dialogue may be taken in illustration :—

“ Guaine to *vy-er* ?”

“ Eze.”

“ Oh, brave ! vine daye vor the volks at the *vy-er*. Guaine a-voote ?”

“ Aye, vooäsed too. Bill hurned a voorke into the old mare's vet-lock, and her's a-valled leeame.”

In these few sentences are nine words in which the change takes place. Here are other examples:—

Vro-ast = frost

Vorrud = forward

Virkin = firkin

Vinger = finger.

Vee-aste = feast

Vlock = flock

Vayther = father

Vier = fire.

The words *vy-er*, fair, and *vi-er*, fire, are pronounced very much alike; and the following extract will illustrate the confusion this sometimes produces:—

Hannah. Beänt there many vyers in Lunnun, Miss?

Visitor. Yes, unfortunately, too many.

Wife. What do a think, Miss, o' thic zilly lass, Hannah? her and vather walked sixteen miles to zee a vyer.

Visitor. Were there many houses burnt?

Hannah. Houses burnt—noa, Miss! There beant nothing at all burnt at vyers.

Visitor. Not anything burnt at fires?

Hannah. Noa, Miss, it wasn't a vier, but a vyer.

Visitor. Well, what do you call a fire?

Hannah. Why, a vyer be wheres they sell gingerbread, and cloth, and ribbon: and show wild beeastes—Oh, moi heart! I wou'dn't go to zee they! I shou'd be zo vrightened! And there be monkey-banks there, what jumps dro' hoops, and eats vier. And girt big wax-dolls in a cart. Moi heart! such a size! One, they zaid, was Boney, and one the Princess Charlotte. Oh, she did look zo purty! And there was zinging, and dancing, and zuch vine vun there. I do like vyers zo much!

At the *end of words*, too, where F has the sharp sound in English, it is in the Somerset dialect changed into V—*e.g.*:

Turve = turf

Hooäve = hoof

Looäve = loaf

Leeäve = leaf

Keeäve = calf

Wiäve = wife.

The next pair of consonants, Z and S, the most celebrated in the dialect, are conveniently represented in the very name of the county itself—"Zoomerzetzheere." These are tongue-and-palate

sounds, S hard, Z soft; and it is the hard sound of S which gives to our language that *sibilant, hissing* character so much complained of by foreigners, and sometimes by natives also. Lord Byron, comparing Italian with English, describes the latter as—

“Our harsh northern *whistling*, grunting, guttural,
Which we are obliged to *hiss*, and *spit*, and *sputter* all.”

The hissing, spitting sound here referred to is that of the letter in question. Of course, we may naturally expect to find this softened in the Somersetshire dialect, and we find it is so universally. At the beginning of a word S is always changed to Z. This is so well known that a single illustration will suffice. Take the following, the first verse of the parable of the sower, translated into the dialect: “Yee-arken, behold a Zower went vooäth to Zow, an as a Zooed Zome Zeeäd vell by the waye Zide, an the vowels o’ the ayre did yeät it up.”

At the end of a syllable, S is softened in such words as *houze*—house; *mouze*—mouse, &c. It is also softened by transposition, and that in rather a noteworthy manner. In a word like *hasp*, for instance, the S cannot be softened so long as it retains its place—the sharp lip-sound P sharpens also the preceding consonant—shuts down sharply upon it, and prevents it dying away into Z. In the Somersetshire dialect the letters are transposed, the S softened, in turn sometimes also softening the P, so that *hasp* becomes *haps*, or *habs*. The following are other examples of this change:—

Claps = clasp
Crips = crisp

Apse = aspen
Wapse } = wasp.
Wopse }

Only one other consonant remains to be considered — *the letter R*, and I am the more anxious to say something about this letter, because its treatment in the dialect, though in many respects very curious, has rarely been noticed even in isolated words, and never referred to as a general characteristic at all. The letter R stands alone — it is rough by nature and in its own right. Like S, it is a tongue-and-palate sound, and, with it, is distinguished for strength rather than for euphony, the one being pre-eminently the hissing, the other the harsh, vibrating sound of the language. R has indeed — like Ireland to successive Governments — always been the “great difficulty” with the leaders of fashion, the rulers of refined speech. The problem, of course, generally is to soften and subdue it as much as possible. In the modern London pronunciation, the R in the middle or towards the end of a syllable tends to go out, so that words like *work, word, world*, become *wawk, waud, waulde*. In the Cockney, or corrupted London pronunciation, indeed, there is a system of compensation at work, by which the Rs that have been unceremoniously thrown out from the middle of words to which they belong, are charitably taken in again at the end of words where they have no business; and young ladies and gentlemen who would think it “ba’bawous” and a “baw” to sound the R in its proper place, speak nevertheless of *Par* and *Mar*,

Mariar and *Sophiar*, the *Crimear*, and the *Alnar*, without having the least idea that there is any inconsistency in so doing. This is, of course, a mere vulgarism. But in the best pronunciation—the pronunciation of the best, the most refined and cultivated people, there is a growing tendency to soften the R as much as possible. This may be seen even in its exaggeration in the language of the “fast” men of the day. The swell or exquisite of any period generally represents to the extreme the fashionable tendencies of the time. No doubt he exaggerates them, but still he represents them, and is therefore useful and valuable to us, even in his absurdity. Now in modern novels, dramas, and satirical poetry in general, it will be found that the exquisite of the period,—

“The fine, young English Gentleman, one of the modern time,”

is represented as speaking a peculiar dialect, the main feature of which consists in the exclusion of the letter R. You must be quite familiar with this in the pages of *Punch*, for the swell often appears there. I will give a specimen, not one of the most recent or the best, but one that happens to be at hand. It was written at the time of the Uncle Tom Mania, and is entitled,—“A Swell’s Homage to Mrs. Stowe:”—

A must wead *Uncle Tom*—a wawk
Which, A’m afwaid’s extwemely slow,
People one meets begin to talk
Of Mrs. Hawietbeechastowe.

'Tis not as if A saw ha name
 To walls and windas still confined ;
 All that is meawly vulga fame :
 A don't wespect the public mind.

But Staffa'd House has made haw quite
 Anotha kind a pawson look,
 A Countess would pasist, last night,
 In asking me about haw book.

She wished to know if I admiawd
 Eva, which quite confounded me :
 And then haw Ladyship inqwaw'd
 Whethaw A didn't hate Legwee ?

Bai Jove ! A was completely flaw'd ;
 A wish'd myself, or haw, at Fwance :
 And that's the way a fella's baw'd
 By ev'wy gal he asks to dance.

A felt myself a gweata fool
 Than A had evaw felt befaw ;
 A'll study at some Wagged School
 The tale of that old Blackamaw !

Now the one feature of these verses is the total exclusion of the letter R, its place being supplied by A or W, one or both. I am not going to decide whether that dialect is polished and refined,—I simply say, that whatever polish and refinement it possesses, I really must claim on behalf of the rustics of Somersetshire, who display as great a horror of the letter R, and are as anxious to suppress it where they can, and soften it in all possible ways where they cannot, as the greatest exquisite that lounges in St. James's, or airs himself in Rotten Row.

Let us see how this is accomplished. In the first place, there is a great number of words in

which the R is altogether excluded. The following are a few of these:—

Aa'th = earth	Scace = scarce
Coäse = coarse	Veäce = fierce
Guth = girth	Vooäsed = forced
He'ath = hearth	Vooath = forth
Ha'sh = harsh	Vust = first
Hoäce = hoarse	Vuss = verse
Oss = horse	Vuze = furze
Maäcy = mercy	Thusty = thirsty
Pason = parson	Wuss = worse
Pasnips = parsnips	Wusser = worst
Pas'le = parcel	Wuth = worth.
Puze = purse	

In the next place, it is often softened by transposition, and this in two cases particularly. 1. *At the beginning of a word.* All who have discussed the subject agree, that however R may be softened or suppressed at the end of a word or syllable, it must be sounded, and strongly sounded, when it begins a word. Now there are a number of words in the Somersetshire dialect, in which this necessity is to a certain extent evaded, and the initial R softened by transposition. As a general rule the R changes places with the vowel, and the aspirate is added. The following are illustrations:—

Hurn = run	Hirchet = Richard
Hird = rid	Hirsle = rustle
Hurd = red	Hirsh = rush
Hirch = rich	Hirddick = ruddick (Ruddock).

With regard to this last word I may mention, that it was by being aware of the rule touching the transposed R, that I was enabled to recognise it. I knew that Ruddeck (literally "little red one") was a common name with the older poets for the Redbreast, and being anxious to know whether it was used in this county, went to a man working in a field, and asked him whether they ever called the Robin the Rudduck. "Noa, zir," said the man, "we dwoant call 'un that, we calls 'un the *Rabbin Hirddick*," which I, of course, at once recognised as the Somersetshire form of the word.

2. *When it follows another consonant.* A similar transposition takes place after another consonant in such words as the following :—

Birge = bridge	Kirsning = christening
Birsh = brush	Girt = great
Dirsh = thrush	Girn = grin
Dird = thread	Gurdled = griddled
Curmson = crimson	Begurge = begrudge
Curse = cress	Apurn = apron, &c.
Kirsmas = Christmas	

The sixth word in the list—*curse*, cress—gives us the true and simple explanation of a common phrase, which sounds at first hearing desperate and profane in the extreme, and, probably, when now used, often really is so; but which is nevertheless, in its original use and meaning, innocent enough. The phrase in question is,—“I don’t care a curse for it,” which is only another form of a phrase still more common, being strictly synonymous with “I don’t care a straw, or a rush.” And

the meaning in either case, of course, is,—“I don’t care a straw—a rush—a cress,”—anything so common, so worthless as a rush or a cress, which is to be found in any ditch by the road-side—“I don’t care even that about the matter.”

This closes the review of the consonants. We have seen the principle laid down at the outset working throughout the entire examination—that soft sounds are preferred to hard, smooth consonants to rough; that this system of softening reaches its climax—becomes most elaborate and minute—in relation to the two consonants that are harshest and roughest in the language—R and S; and it is difficult, therefore, to resist the conclusion, that a dialect in which these are the peculiarities is in its pronouncing characteristically smooth and easy.

I had proposed to show that it is also “pure and classical”—by which I mean that its leading features are not provincial corruptions of modern English, but genuine remains of classic Anglo-Saxon; but I have already sufficiently occupied your time, and this part of the subject must be left for a future occasion.

SECOND PAPER.

You will remember that in taking up this subject on a former occasion, I proposed to confine myself to the *pronunciation*, leaving altogether for the present the *vocabulary* of the dialect, as far too important to be made a mere supplement to the consideration of the vocal sounds, which is at best only an introductory branch of the subject. You will remember also that I proposed to look at the pronunciation under two aspects, the *phonetic*—what the characteristic sounds of the dialect actually are; and the *historical*—their antiquity, source, and authority. Under the former head I endeavoured to rebut a commonly received opinion, that the sounds of the dialect are peculiarly hard and discordant, and to the authorities then quoted in support of this view, I may now add that of the earliest writer on English dialects—Alexander Gill, Master of St. Paul's School, and for some years Milton's tutor, who, writing on this subject in 1619, speaks as follows: “But of all our dialects none equal the *Western* in barbarism, especially if you hear it spoken by the country people of Somerset; for one might well doubt whether they spoke English or some foreign idiom.” In opposition to this view I endeavoured to show, that so far from being rough and unmusical, the pronunciation is remarkably soft and easy, abounding to a

characteristic extent in open vowels and smooth consonants.

Under the second head I have now to illustrate historically, that the pronunciation of the dialect, instead of being, as it is also commonly considered to be, vulgar and corrupt, was, on the contrary, pure and legitimate—I might almost say classical. But in speaking of comparative purity, some standard must of course be assumed, and this is naturally found in Anglo-Saxon, the root-element and mother-tongue of modern English. I need scarcely remind you that at least two-thirds of all the words in the language are of Saxon origin; that these words include the terms expressive of all natural relations, times and seasons, objects, affections, and activities; and that the Saxon element of English is thus the well-spring of its tenderness and strength, the source of its sparkling life and kindly merriment, its healthful bloom and manly vigour. Anglo-Saxon, therefore, as the parent of each, is the standard by which the purity of both literary and provincial English must alike be tested. It used to be thought, indeed, and the opinion may still be held by those who have not considered the subject, that the provincial dialects were only indirectly connected with the root-element of the language—are at best only grandchildren of the mother-tongue, correct English being the direct offspring. The very reverse, however, would be much nearer the truth, literary English being in fact wrought out of the dialects, instead of the dialects being degraded forms of the more refined speech. This is now fully understood; and we

may say with confidence that the dialect is not only the direct offspring of the parent stock, but the elder son, who, having remained always at home in his father's house, cultivating the land of his sires, has retained much of their habits, language, and way of life. Current English, on the other hand, is rather the younger but more active, enterprising son, who, having early left home to see the world, has, in various expeditions, military or commercial, visited many lands, conversed with men of different manners, and gathered in knowledge and experience from every quarter; and who accordingly returns changed not only in appearance, but in speech and manner also, the ruddy Saxon bloom of his cheek tanned to manly brown, his once fair hair of a deeper colour, and all traces of a rustic origin well-nigh lost in his more easy, polished bearing, more rich and copious vocabulary, more free, cultivated, and various life. So changed, indeed, as scarcely to be recognised by the elder, to whom the lapse of time has brought no change, except the inevitable vicissitudes of the seasons; and who, having continued from year to year ploughing the lands his forefathers ploughed, eating the beef it was their pride to raise, and drinking the good October in which their souls delighted, naturally stigmatises the refinements of the younger, whether of speech or manner, as "new-fangled contraptions," "outlandish dixnary talk," "vurrin vrenchivied, slack-twisted ways."

Such, in general, is the relation between current and provincial English. The dialects faithfully reflect the character of those who preserve them,

and are eminently conservative. The genuine native, the true son of the soil, is slow-going and self-contained to a proverb. He looks with distrust and suspicion, if not with aversion and downright hatred, on everything to which he is unaccustomed, resisting every innovation, every novelty, with the whole *vis inertiae* of his nature, which is immense. This characteristic is roughly, but nevertheless truly enough, represented in the following verses, which appeared a few years ago in a local paper, and which I will read as an illustration of the dialect:—

THE WOLD ZUMMERZET VARMER.

I be a Zummerzet Varmer, one o' the wolden school ;
 I hiate theaze modern wize uns, who tiake me var a vool ;
 The wordle's gwain to ruin, ets end I plainly zee,
 Var ev'ry theing's tarning upzide down, vrom what et used ta be.

 I uzed ta goo ta plow en marn, an do a good day's work,
 An arderwards walk ta markit, all drue the mud an dert ;
 But youngsters now be got za proud, that they won't work at all,
 They ride ta markit in vine gigs, but pride ool have a vall.

 When tha Landlards uzed to tell us that the Parliment voke
 were wrong,
 We vollowed 'em ; whata'er thay cried, we joained 'em in the
 zong ;
 But Varmers now theink var theimselfes, and be sich larned
 men,
 That thay want ta leaid the Landlards, 'stead o' tha Landlards
 leaiding theam.

 Mazheenery now ez all the goo, ya caint doo anytheing
 But what thay'll zay you doo et wrong, you must uze some
 mazheene ;
 I wesh thay'd tax tha cursed theings, I haite thaer vary zight,
 Thay tiake the Labrer's work away, and that I'm sure baint
 right.

Thay talk about thear cheamastry, an tha duze known whot
bezdies,

Tes a zign we're gwain ta ruin whan Varmers get za wize ;
Much larning ezent wanted in managing a varm,
Ef tha know tha woay to reайд an rite, muore only doz em hairm.

I years 'em talk ov Varmers' Clubs, and ax 'em what they
meain.

Thay tell me o' discussions 'bout mazheenery druv by steam ;
Thay meet ta talk, and reайд, et zeems, liake other larned men,
But out a vield a plowen groun ez a better plaice for theam.

I be a Zummerzet Varmer, one o' the wolden school ;
I hiate theaze modern wize uns, who tiake me var a vool ;
The wordle's gwain ta ruin, ets end I plainly zee,
Var ev'ry theing's tarned upzide down vrom what et uzed ta be.

I see that this was written ten years ago, and it is, therefore, to be hoped that the worthy who complains with such indignant pathos has gone to his rest before the recent aggressive operations of the "Bath and West of England Agricultural Society" were set on foot. For their lectures on Clay Soils, in the very market-place where (as he would consider) only the produce of such soils ought to be exhibited and discussed—their agricultural implement show-yards opened at his very door in the district sacred to manual labour, with farmers, old and young, crowding to watch the experimental working of steam-ploughs and flails—would have been quite too much for him. Had he survived so long, this last unmanly outrage on his feelings would certainly have broken his heart; his death would have made a paragraph for the newspapers, headed, "Fatal Accident from a Steam-Engine;" and any enlightened jury of his country-

men would have been strictly justified in laying a deodand on boiler and piston as the clearly-ascertained cause and instrument of death.

From this conservative character of the dialects we may naturally expect to find in them, and especially in those furthest removed from the centre of national life and activity, more genuine Anglo-Saxon than in literary English, which is exposed to so many strong modifying influences. This is, in reality, the fact. I believe there is not a single dialect in the country which does not preserve important relics of Anglo-Saxon in accent, idiom, or vocabulary, commonly in all, which are lost in the current tongue. And while this is to some extent true of all dialects, it is likely to be pre-eminently true of the Somerset. Why? Because the Somersetshire dialect occupies the very seat of classical Anglo-Saxon. It was in the kingdom of Wessex that Anglo-Saxon was originally studied, elaborated, and brought to high literary perfection. Now the kingdom of Wessex, as we know, included Hampshire, Berkshire, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, and part of Devon; so that, for practical purposes, part of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, may be taken as about the centre of its influence. Here Anglo-Saxon was diligently studied, and successfully used as an instrument of great precision, compass, and power. Nearly all the remains left us of that once extensive and still noble literature are in the Saxon of Wessex. In poetry, the sacred and profane epics of Cædmon and Beowulf, the metrical lives of the Exeter Book, and the Vercelli Codex, with not a few sacred and national lyrics; in history, the

Chronicle, and Alfred's translation of Bede and Orosius; in philosophy, Boethius; in Theology, the versions of the Gospels, Psalms, and Pentateuch; the voluminous Homilies of Ælfric, and others, all in the same dialect—the national tongue of Wessex. Here, indeed, Anglo-Saxon first rose to the dignity of a national tongue; and here, too, it lasted longer, breaking up more slowly and gradually than elsewhere. As we might naturally expect, therefore, the Somersetshire dialect is particularly rich in Anglo-Saxon remains, both in its pronunciation and vocabulary.

I will now proceed to illustrate this in relation to the former—the pronunciation—and in doing so will follow the plan of the last paper, dealing first with the *vowels* and then with the *consonants*.

In looking into the vowel-system of the Somersetshire dialect, we have seen that its characteristic tendency is *to lengthen, open, and multiply the vowel-sounds*. Now this is essentially an Anglo-Saxon peculiarity—a peculiarity of Wessex Anglo-Saxon. This language abounded to a curious extent in mixed and double vowel-sounds; this being, in fact, the great characteristic (so far as the vowels were concerned), by which the southern or Saxon branch is distinguished from the northern or Angle branch of the common tongue, as well as from other dialects on the Continent, with which it is closely allied. Anglo-Saxon, as you are aware, belongs to what is termed the Low-German division of the Teutonic tongues, the dialects of which are distinguished from those of the High-German by a more or less manifest preference for softer sounds.

I may remind you, too, in passing, that these epithets, *high* and *low*, as applied to the countries in which the Germanic tongues are spoken, refer not to their position north and south of each other, but to their comparative height above the level of the sea, High-German being, in fact, for the most part spoken much further south than Low-German. Low and high in this connexion, therefore, simply mean plain and mountainous ; and the reason why these natural features are made the basis of a philological division is the clearly-ascertained fact, that the geographical difference of surface universally tends to produce a marked difference of pronunciation. The dwellers in high or mountainous lands are found to affect clear decisive vowels, and rough guttural consonants, while the inhabitants of level or gently undulating lowlands, of rich pastoral valleys, delight in soft vowels, and smooth consonantal sounds. While, however, all the Low-Germanic tongues possess these general characteristics, the Anglo-Saxon has more curious combinations of vowel-sounds than any other ; and in these the Somersetshire dialect will be found to be its faithful representative. I, indeed, believe that the careful observation of the Somersetshire vowel-sounds might materially help in fixing the value of some Anglo-Saxon vowels, about the exact force of which there is still a good deal of uncertainty. I will illustrate this relation of the vowels in two positions—as *initial* and *medial*.

Take, first, the *medial* vowels, or those occurring in the middle of a word. The special combinations of vowels in this position peculiar to Anglo-Saxon

are those of *eä* and *eo*, representing *a* and *i* of other dialects. The sounds expressive of these combinations, which are so characteristic in Anglo-Saxon, while altogether lost in common English, are retained in all their integrity in the Somersetshire dialect. Take, for instance, a word like *beam*; here the spelling, both in Anglo-Saxon and English, is the same, but the pronunciation very different. In the former, each vowel did duty, and the word was sounded *beäm*; but in the latter the two are changed to one—long *e*—and the word is *beem* or *beme*. The spelling belongs to the old language, the pronunciation to the new:—the word is Anglo-Saxon to the eye, but English to the ear. The Somersetshire man, however, is faithful to the spelling, and to this day sounds the word as his Saxon forefathers did before him, *beäm* or *be-ame*. The following are other instances in which the Saxon spelling is kept, but the pronunciation lost:—

<i>Anglo-Saxon.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Pronunciation.</i>
Beöfer	beaver	beever.
Cleäfe	cleave	cleeve.
Deäd	dead	ded.
Deäf	deaf	def.
Leäf	leaf	leef.
Heäfod	head	hed.
Heäfor	heifer	heffer.

In other cases, again, the word has undergone a change, and the spelling is conformed to the pronunciation. The following are illustrations of this:—

<i>Saxon.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Saxon.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Hreäd	Reed.	Steäp	Steep.
Neäd	Need.	Steör	Steer.
Sceäp	Sheep.	Treöw	Tree.

It need scarcely be said that the Somersetshire man, in such cases, remains faithful to the older form, pronouncing the words *ree-ade*, *shee-ape*, *stee-ape*, &c. The following list, illustrating, in parallel columns, the relation of the mother-tongue, the dialect, and the current speech, will bring out this more fully:—

<i>Saxon.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Somerset.</i>
Ceälf	calf	kee-ave.
Ceäre	care	kee-ar.
Geäp	gape	gee-ape.
Geät	gate	gee-ate.
Geärden	garden	gee-arden.
Heälf	half	hee-ave.
Heärm	harm	yee-arme.
Meädo	meadow	mee-ade.
Meölc	milk	mee-olk.
Sceäme	shame	shee-ame.
Sceäde	shade	shee-ade.
Screäpe	scrape	scree-ape.
Sweärm	swarm	swee-arme.

It would be out of place to illustrate what has now been said by any long extracts from Anglo-Saxon authors, but I will just quote a few lines before leaving this part of the subject. A page of any Anglo-Saxon book opened at random would supply ample illustrations of the sounds under

review. The following are from Cædmon, the inspired Monk of Whitby, who, a thousand years before Milton, sang of Paradise Lost in a sacred epic worthy of the subject and the name, though, of course, as mere isolated lines, these extracts can give us no idea whatever of his poetic style:—

“ Under beam-sceade :
Blœde bereafod.”
(Under tree-shadow
Of joy bereaved.)

“ Geseah deorc-sceado
Sweart swithrian.”
(He saw dark-shadow
Swart prevail.)

“ Egor-streæmas :
Swearte swogan :
Sæ's up stigon :
Ofer stæth-weallas :”
(Ocean-billows,
Black they boomed,
Seas uprose
O'er the strand-walls.)

You will notice in these extracts the constant occurrence of *ea*; the following lines from Beowulf illustrate both *ea*, and *eo*:—

“ Nœfre ic maran geseah :
Eorl ofer Eorthan :
Thonne is eower sum :
Secg on searwum.”

(Never saw I a nobler
Earl upon earth,
Than one among you,—
A hero in harness.)

"*Het tha in-beran :
Eofer-heafod segn ;
Heatho-steapne helm :
Guth-sweord geatolic.*"

(Bade them in bear,
The boar-headed banner,—
The tower-steep helm,
And shining war-sword.)

It will be seen that in this large and most characteristic class of medial vowels, the living dialect is the faithful reflex of the older language.

I will now look at the *initial* vowels; not that there is anything specifically different in these, the same vowels being often, of course, both medial and initial, only the position of the latter occasions a slight difference of treatment, which makes it convenient to notice them apart. You will remember that, at the last meeting, I stated there were a number of words beginning with two vowels, which had only a single, and that often a short vowel-sound in common English; and that the Somersetshire dialect retained the full sound of both, by prefixing to the first the semi-vowel sound of Y. The following are illustrations of this:—

Yee-arn = earn.	Yee-ade = head.
Yee-arly = early.	Yee-ard = heard.
Yee-ate = eat.	Yee-ate = heat.
Yee-ath = earth.	Yee-ale = ale.

I said, at the same time, that a similar process took place with regard to other initial vowel-sounds and combinations. The combinations referred to are those of *oa* and *oi*. To words beginning with

these vowels the Somersetshire dialect prefixes the semi-consonant W, in order to bring out the full sound of each ; W thus securing in one set of cases exactly the same end that Y did in the other. The following are examples :—

Wo-ake = oak.

Wo-ath = oath.

Wo-ats = oats.

Who-are = hoar (frost).

Who-ard = hoard.

Who-ame = home.

Wo-al'd = old.

Wo-ther = other, &c.

This may be illustrated by an extract from the fireside reflections of Willum Little, sometime shepherd on the downs of Wessex :—

“ It’s *oondervul* to me how things *do* move about whenever a body ‘s got a drap o’ zummut in ‘s *yeäd*. Last harrest, a’ter zupper, at th’ houze yander, I walked *whoam* by myzelf, and zeed the moön and the zeven stars dancin’ away like vengeance. Then they there girt elmen-trees in the close was a dancin’ away like Bill Iles and his mates at a morris. ‘ My zarvice to ‘e,’ zays I ; ‘ I haups you won’t tread on my *twoes* ;’ zo I went drough a sheard in th’ hedge, instead o’ gwöin drough th’ geät. Well, when I got *whoam*, I managed to vind the kay-hole o’ th’ dwooer ; but ‘twas a lang time afore I could get un to bide still enough, and got up stayers. Massy upon us ! the leetle table (I zeed un very plain by the light o’ th’ moön) was runnin’ round the röom like mad, and there was th’ two *wold* chayers runnin’ a’ter he ; and by and by, round comes the bed a’ter they two. ‘ Ha ! ha ! ’ zays I, ‘ that’s very vine ; but how be I to lay down while you cuts

zich capers?' Well, the bed comed round dree times, and the vowerth time I drowd myzelf flump atop ov un; but in th' marnin' I vound myzelf laying on the vlöör, wi' ael me duds on! I never could make out how thic was."

When I last addressed you, I did not illustrate this peculiarity; but the process is altogether so curious, so characteristic of the dialect, and so complete, that it certainly deserves, and, I think, will repay, a little examination. At first sight, indeed, such forms as *yeät* and *woäts* may seem very clownish, and the prefixing of *y* or *w* in either case quite accidental and capricious; but in reality this is by no means the case. The whole procedure is most systematic and consistent, and the reasons of it lie deep in the philosophy of language and of sound. A little illustration will soon make this clear. The process altogether depends on the use of *y* and *w*, and we may, therefore, naturally expect to find in the special character of these letters the key of its explanation. What are they, and how produced? They are, then, as we know, what are called semi-vowels: they stand midway between the vowels and consonants, sharing, to some extent, the nature, and at times performing the office, of both. They are half-vowels and half-consonants; and if we look at the manner of their production, we see at once how it is they possess this character. The natural order of the vowels is—*i, e, a, o, u*, or *i* being equal to double *e*, and *u* to double *o*—*ee, e, a, o, oo*. This is the natural order, because it is that determined by the passage of the breath in uttering the vowel-sounds—this

passage gradually widening from the first (*ee*), where it is closest, to the last (*oo*), where it is most open. On slowly sounding each letter of the series, you will find that the space through which the breath passes is very much that from a straight or slightly curved line to a circle—the aperture in *ee* being a double line or loop slightly opened, and the loop widening with each succeeding vowel till it becomes an ellipse in *o*, and a complete circle in *oo*. The vowels *ee* and *oo* being thus the most distant, do not easily coalesce, and any attempt to pass quickly from the one to the other produces a sharp breathing, which has in it something essentially consonantal. The utterance is no longer a pure breath-sound, but one modified by the rapid change in position of the organs of speech. And this modification will obviously be twofold, as we begin at the bottom or the top. If we commence with the first vowel, *ee*, and pass rapidly to the last, *oo*, the modified sound produced is *y, eeo*—*you*; while the process reversed gives *w, ooee*—*we*; the former being illustrated by the pronoun *you*, which in Anglo-Saxon is *eow*, and the latter by the French affirmative *oui*, sounded, as we know, *we*. Thus at either end of the vowel series a half-vowel is evolved; and *y* and *w* are neither more nor less than the extreme vowel-sounds sharpened into semi-consonants by being pronounced rapidly together.

You will now be able to see the principle and understand the philosophy of the Somersetshire pronunciation in the feature under review. In words beginning with such a combination as *ea*—where the passage is from the higher to the lower,

from the closer to the more open vowel—if both are fully pronounced, there is a natural tendency to evolve the sound of *y*; for example, *eat*—*ee-ate*, or *yeät*. On the other hand, in words beginning with a vowel lower down in the series, and passing up—as in such combinations as *oa*, *oi*, for instance—the tendency will necessarily be to produce the sound of *w*. Bearing in mind the characteristic tendency of the dialect to lengthen and open the vowel-sounds, the process will be something like the following:—

Oats = ooäts = woäts.

Oath = ooäth = woäth.

Oak = ooäk = woäk.

There is no tendency towards any such pronunciation in current English, simply because, as I have said, no attempt is made to sound both vowels, the two being crushed or commuted into one—*ea* and *oa* into *e* and *o* respectively. The initials *y* and *w* are prefixed in order to prevent this crushing of two vowels into one, which is contrary to the whole spirit of the Somersetshire pronunciation; and you will thus see how systematic the whole process is, and how completely it accomplishes its end.

It is, moreover, thoroughly Anglo-Saxon. Looking first at the initial *y*, it is a universal law of Anglo-Saxon pronunciation that the initial *e* before *a* or *o* is sounded as *y*. From what has just been said, you will now understand the reason of this, and see how it must be so, as we see in the few English words where both vowels are still sounded,

as in *ewe*, a sheep, pronounced *yoo*, and *ewer*, a water-vessel, *yooer*, both of Saxon origin. And in cases where there is an apparent inconsistency, the dialect will be found faithful to the older tongue. In the class of words already referred to, beginning with *a* singly, where the *a* is treated as *ea*, the Somersetshire pronunciation represents the older form of the word—*e. g.*, *ale* and *arm*, sounded in Somersetshire *yeäle* and *yeärm*, are in Anglo-Saxon *eale* and *earm*.

The initial *w*, too, dates back to the older tongue. The Anglo-Saxon, indeed, prefixed *w* and aspirated *w* to many words where it is now altogether lost in English, and sounded it in others where it remains only to the eye, being silent, or all but silent, to the ear. In the words *whole*, *wholesome*, *wholesale*, for instance, the *w* is not sounded at all, and in *who*, *whose*, *whom*, it is only indirectly heard in the modification of the vowel-sound it determines. The initial *w* is, indeed, quite archaic, the universal tendency of languages being to shorten, condense, and cut off both initial and final vowels as much as possible; and this full *oo* sound of the Somersetshire pronunciation dates back not only to Anglo-Saxon, but, in all likelihood, through it to the old Gothic, of which it is a characteristic feature. The word *hoop*, for instance, in hooping-cough, appears in Gothic as *hoo-pan*; in Anglo-Saxon as *hwapan*, or (the accented *o* being equal to *oo*) *hwoopan*; in English as *hoop*; for though *whoop* does still exist in spelling and pronunciation, it is rarely used, *hoop* being the common form both to the eye and the ear.

As there is a class of words in which the initial *a* is treated as *ea*, so there is another in which the initial *o* is dealt with as *oa*; but the vowel in these cases generally stands for the Anglo-Saxon accented *a*, which had a broad diphthongal sound, represented in English pronunciation by *o* (as *bán*, bone; *stán*, stone, &c.); often, however, in spelling by *oa* (as *fám*, foam; *ár*, oar, &c.); sometimes by *oe* (as *fá*, foe; *wá*, woe, &c.); but which in Somersetshire is really pronounced *oa*, as in *home* (A.S. *hám*)—*whoäme*; *oak* (sounded *oke* in current English, the *a* being silent), (A.S. *ák*), *woäk*, &c. Thus, even in its apparent irregularities, the dialect, as compared with the literary language, is still the more faithful and consistent representative of Anglo-Saxon sounds.

Only one other point remains to be glanced at in relation to *y* and *w*, and that relates to another apparent inconsistency. While, on the one hand, the dialect prefixes *y* and *w* to a number of words where no such letters exist in current English, on the other, it throws them away in many cases where they really do. In the mouth of a Somersetshire man, for example, *yes* and *yesterday* become *eeze* and *eezeterday*—*will* and *would* become '*ool*' and '*ood*', so that really a spirit of contradiction seems to be at work. A little examination, however, will show that this is not so. It must be observed that in these cases there are not *two* initial vowels, only *one*, so that the semi-consonants are not prefixed in order to bring out a double vowel-sound. On the contrary, they are produced by crushing an original long vowel into a short

one, and thus represent the result of that condensation. The Somersetshire man, however, delighting in vowels, will not endorse any such process. He accordingly resolves the semi-consonant and short vowel into the original long vowel, and *yes* accordingly becomes *eeze*; *will*, *'ool*, &c. "Vowels, vowels," is his cry—"the more and longer the better:" accordingly, as he prefixes the semi-consonant in order to make one vowel two, so he throws it away in order to make a short vowel long. The same principle is at work in both cases.

What has already been said about the letter *w* will fully explain the *tripthongs* to which I referred at the last meeting, and which are so marked a feature of the dialect. These occur in words having the vowel combinations *oi*, *oa*, or *oe*; and, as you will now understand, in order to bring out fully the sound of both, it was necessary to prefix the sound of *u* or *w* to the first. The following are examples:—

Bwoile = boil

Bwoy = boy

Guaine = going

Mwoile = moil

Pwoint = point

Qwoit = coit

Qwoin = coin

Spwoile = spoil.

Bwoards = boards

Qwoat = coat

Qwoast = coast

Twoad = toad.

This, too, is thoroughly Anglo-Saxon, as such forms as *sweord*, a sword, and *cweorne*, a mill, would sufficiently prove. Anglo-Saxon is, indeed, most probably the only language in which such combinations ever existed, as the Somersetshire is the only

living dialect in which they are fully and familiarly pronounced.

The first part of the inquiry closes here, and I think, as the result of it, that the Somersetshire pronunciation—in many features of its vowel system, at all events—may fairly claim to be a tolerably good representative of classic Anglo-Saxon.

I will now look for a little at the *consonants*; but the evidence in this case being much less minute and conclusive than in that of the vowels, they can be dealt with in a more summary manner. I will follow the arrangement already laid down, and take up the four classes of consonants in order.

The first to be considered are D, T, and TH. There was a tendency in Anglo-Saxon to change T and TH into D—or rather this substitution was certainly in many cases made, though, at the same time, it must be confessed, not in the regular, characteristic way which marks the process in the Somersetshire dialect. That the substitution existed, and was even not uncommon, is shown by such examples as these:—

Eard = earth	Moder = mother
Fæder = father	Wæder = wither
Farding } = farthing	Weder = weather
Feording } = farthing	Wedmore = wetmore.
Gadrian = to gather	

In the first canto of *Beowulf*, it is said of his sire:—

“ Fæder ellor hwearf
Aldor of *Earde*. ”
(The father had passed away,—
The Prince from his native land.)

And Cædmon in says :

" And thee Frea mihtig,
 Frostas and snowas,
 Winter-biter *weder*,
 And folcen-faru,
 Lufige on lyfte."

(Thee, mighty Lord,
 Frost and snows,
 Winter-bitter weather,
 And the welkin-course
 Praise in the lift.)

A parallel passage in the "Story of Hananiah," from the Exeter Book, begins as follows :—

" Fæder frost and snow,
 Folca waldend,
 Winter-biter *weder*," &c.

(Father! ruler of nations!
 Thee frost and snow,
 Bitter-winter weather
 Praise.)

In semi-Saxon, the tendency became more manifest; Robert of Gloucester using *Artur*, and Lazamon, *Ardur* for *Arthur*.*

The next consonants are V and F. The Anglo-Saxon alphabet did not contain the letter V, but we are not, therefore, to conclude that the spoken language had not the sound; for many, nay most, languages have sounds for which they possess no separate sign, and one sign often does duty for another. The Swedish F, for instance, always has

* In further illustration of this point, two hymns to the Virgin Mary belonging to the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century respectively, were here read by the speaker.

the sound of V; in German, W; in modern Greek and Russian, B; so that, while we write and speak the word Sebastopol, the Russians and Greeks always sound it Sevastopol. And we know, as a fact, that the sound of V not only existed, but was even common in Anglo-Saxon. It is, indeed, one of the laws of its pronunciation, that f between two vowels, or at the end of a word, is always sounded v: and we retain one word—the preposition *of*—in which the final f is still sounded as v, *of*—or. The following are instances of f between two vowels having the sound of v:—

Beofer = beaver	Onfil = anvil
Efel = evil	Ofen = oven
Efen = evening	Weafer = weaver
Fefer = fever	Weafung = weaving.

In the following words the final f = v:—

Glofa = glove	Cofa = cove
Cleafa = clavel	Leof = love.

This explains what has sometimes puzzled grammarians,—the plural form of such words as *calf*, *half*, *leaf*, *loaf*, *life*, *wife*. According to the law, ending in a sharp mute, they ought to form their plural by the addition of the sharp sibilant s—*calfs*, *halfs*, *leafs*, &c.; but they do not. On the contrary, the final mute is softened, and the plural formed in the soft sibilant sound of z, *calves*, *loaves*, &c. Dr. Latham, in discussing the difficulty, suggests it as highly probable, that the original singulars ended in v, *calv*, &c.; but this probability might, perhaps, have been changed to

certainty, had he known that, in the Western dialect, the singular forms, &c., actually end in *v* at the present time. By the law of Anglo-Saxon pronunciation, they must have done so originally, and by the practice of the dialect they do so still.

It is doubtful whether the initial *f* was ever sounded as *v*, in genuine Anglo-Saxon words, though such forms as *vox* and *vixen* go back very far; but if the initial *v* was unknown in classical Anglo-Saxon, it must have made its appearance immediately on the breaking up of the literary language, as its presence is a striking feature in some of the earliest and best specimens of semi-Saxon we possess. Among these certainly must be included the "*Ancren Riwle*," a kind of manual for the guidance and encouragement of nuns in entering on a cloistered religious life. The time of its production must be within a few years of *Lazamon*, not later probably than 1220; and its author—long thought to be Simon of Ghent—was in all likelihood Bishop Poore, who held the see of Salisbury about this date. But whoever was its author, the work is of great value and interest, especially to us, having been produced, if not actually in the county, at least on the borders, originally designed for the use of ladies living near Blandford, and written in the provincial semi-Saxon of the West. Apart, however, from its philological and local value, it is of interest on its own account, being written in a lively, vigorous style, abounding with proverbial phrases and homely illustrations, the writer showing through-

ont, apart from the peculiar views of a religious life incident to his age and position, great freshness of mind, devoutness of heart, sound sense, and wise, shrewd, at times almost humorous, reflectiveness. The book abounds with Somersetshire forms, and especially with the initial V. You cannot open a page without finding a number of instances,— such words as *vlesh*, *veond*, *vlint*, *vound*, *valleth*, *volloweth*, *vlieth*, &c. Take a single sentence, “Little dropen thurleth the *vlint*, that oft valleth thereon.” “Little drops pierce the flint whereon they often fall.”

The next consonants are *Z* and *S*, and they may be dismissed in a few words. The letter *Z* does not exist in the Saxon alphabet any more than *V*; but we are far less entitled to infer the absence of the sound from the nonexistence of the sign in this case than even in that of *V*; for, as Ben Jonson says, “*Z* is a letter often heard amongst us, but seldom seen.” And certainly, in common English words, for any single *Z* that is seen, there are at least a dozen or a score heard. The *S* of the plural, in a vast number of words, such as *trees*, *days*, *hills*, *stags*, &c., is really *Z*.

This notwithstanding, however, it is still questionable whether the sound of *Z* did exist in Anglo-Saxon at all. The initial *Z*, we may say with certainty, did not, except in foreign words; and it is generally thought that it was never sounded in any position. I am disposed, however, to believe, on philological grounds, which it would not be suitable now to detail, that it did exist, and is still

recognisable, at the end of some few words. However this may be, it soon made its appearance in semi-Saxon and early English.

The only remaining letter is R, and about it there is really very little to be said. Both cases of softening by transposition, which I adverted to at the last meeting, were of Anglo-Saxon origin. The softening of the initial R is seen in such verbs as *hirsle*, to *rustle*, *hurnen*, *urnen*, to run; *urn* being a common form in Saxon and semi-Saxon, sometimes with the aspirate, more commonly without it. The transposition after one or more consonants is also thoroughly Saxon:—an instance occurred in a sentence just given, *thurl* for thrill; and *burge*, *cerse*, *forst*, *gær*, *cirps*, &c. (bridge, cress, grass, crisp, &c.), were common Anglo-Saxon forms.

This closes the inquiry; and I think we have found, as the result of it, that the vowel system of the Somersetshire pronunciation is not only generally, but in its main features, minutely, Anglo-Saxon; that the system of consonants is partially so, the points of difference arising from the predilection of the dialect for softer sounds; and that these softer sounds, though not traceable to classic Anglo-Saxon, appeared immediately on its breaking up, in the semi-Saxon that followed. I believe—and there is a curious mass of evidence in support of the belief—that the breaking up of the literary Saxon, although this was the time at which these softer sounds first appeared, was neither the true cause nor era of their *production*, only the occasion of their *manifestation*; that they existed contem-

poraneously with the classic tongue, constituting a Somersetshire dialect of Anglo-Saxon, as they do of modern English: in short, that they are as old as anything in the county, except its natural features, and a few of the names they bear, and date back to the Continental seats whence Somerset was originally peopled. Of course, it would be out of place to do more than to allude to such an argument at present. Enough if I have succeeded to any extent in establishing the proposition with which I started, and have been able to bring forward any facts to show that the characteristic sounds of the Somersetshire dialect are neither unmusical nor without authority.

By

**THE
PRAYER OF THE DYING THIEF.**

AND

OUR LORD'S GRACIOUS ANSWER:

WITH THE INCIDENTS OF

A SERMON

OCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF JOSIAH PAINE,

*WHO WAS EXECUTED FOR SHEEP STEALING, ON FRENCHEN
HEATH, ON THE 26 APRIL 1808.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,

*WHEN THE AWFUL SENTENCE OF THE LAW WAS PROOUNCED; AND THE
REALITY OF A DYING CRUSADE HAVING TAKEN PLACE SATISFACTORIALLY
ESTABLISHED IN HIS SUBSEQUENT DEEP HUMILITY, CONTRITION OF
HEART, AND TRUE ILLUMINANCE FOR HIS NUMEROUS SINS;—ALSO, HIS
FIRM TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE MERCY OF A COVENANT GOD
THROUGH THE BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.*

BY HENRY HEAP,

*Minister of the Tabernacle, Brighton, late of Mary Street Chapel,
(formerly Dr. Watts' St. Mary Ave.)*

"Is not this a lewd parson and of the crew?"—Zech. 13. 2.

ELEVENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

**SOLD BY HAMILTON, AND BAYNES,
PATERNOSTER ROW.**

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AND

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HEATH, ON THE 2nd APRIL, 1829.

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Dedication.

TO GEORGE DOUGLAS, ESQ.,

OF

DOUGLAS FARMS,
LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK,
NORTH AMERICA.

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

IT is with unfeigned pleasure that I avail myself of your kind permission to dedicate to you the Eleventh Edition of this Sermon, as a token of my sincere regard and high veneration for your benevolent and Christian character, and as a memorial of your sojourn among us at Brighton in 1840.

I have the honour to subscribe myself yours to serve in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,

HENRY HEAP.

Russell Square, August 8, 1840.

**The profits arising from the sale of this Sermon will be given in
aid of the Tabernacle Sunday School.**

THE
ADDRESS TO THE CONGREGATION.

MY RESPECTED FRIENDS,

You are all aware of the recent solemn event, which has caused our assembling together sooner than usual this evening ; and as the chapel is excessively crowded, as well as the vestry, so that many have scarcely standing room, it is not my intention to add to the inconvenience of your situation, nor unnecessarily to trespass upon your patience in the delivery of a long and tedious introduction. The young man, **JOSIAH PAINE**, was executed on Penenden heath, near Maidstone, Kent, on the 2nd of April, for sheep-stealing. At his own particular request, I attended him in his last moments, with the Rev. Mr. Winter, the Chaplain of the prison ; and I am truly happy to say, that we, with others who witnessed by night and day his becoming and exemplary conduct, after the dreadful sentence of the law had been pronounced, have substantial and satisfactory evidence to believe that he died a real penitent and a humble believer in the Son of God.

My design in calling the attention of the public to the affecting scene which cut off from the land of the living this poor young man, is, that his ignominious death may be a solemn warning to us all ; particularly to young people, to show them the awful nature and fruits of sin ; to guard them against the least approach to vice ; to earnestly entreat them to forsake their wicked companions, who seek their final ruin, by leading them in paths of crime and infamy ; and likewise to unfold to my hearers, the abundant, rich, free, and all-sufficient grace of God, gloriously and triumphantly displayed through the efficacy of the blood of Christ in the salvation of the vilest rebels and the chief of sinners.

The text to which I will now refer you, as peculiarly suitable and illustrative of the preceding observation, you will find recorded in

LUKE XXIII. 42, 43.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom! And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

O! may the Lord the Spirit enable me to set forth to you clearly, faithfully, and affectionately, the momentous truths contained in this surprising portion of holy scripture, and savingly accompany them to your hearts by his living unction, that some lost sinner may be plucked as a brand from the fierce burning of fire unquenchable; and that the Lord's regenerated family may be edified and stand fast in the true grace of God: then sower and reapers will rejoice together, and gather fruit unto life eternal, to the everlasting honour of our covenant God and mighty Redeemer.

The text consists of two parts.

I. THE PRAYER OF THE DYING THIEF.

II. THE ALMIGHTY SAVIOUR'S GRACIOUS ANSWER.

I. His PRAYER,—“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!” In which is observable, first, the person he addressed, or the object of his prayer—*Lord*. The Greek word here used, and in other passages of scripture translated *Lord*, literally signifies, master, ruler, and governor; and when applied to Christ it denotes his supremacy and sovereignty. By this expressive title he is revealed to us as the King of kings, and Lord of lords—the Governor of all worlds—the Head of the church, and the Almighty Saviour of sinners. The learned Zanchie observes, that this name is simply and absolutely ascribed to Christ a thousand times in the writings of the apostles. Dr. Pearson, bishop of Chester, in his justly celebrated Exposition of the Creed, remarks, that not only Christ is *the Lord*, but that this title doth so properly belong unto him, that the term “*the Lord*” alone, absolutely taken, is frequently used by the evangelists and apostles determinately for Christ, insomuch that the angels observe that dialect, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay!” Matt. xxviii. 6. Nor is it difficult to find that name amongst the books of the law, in the most high and full signification; for it is most frequently used as the name of the supreme God, sometimes for “El,” or “Elohim;” sometimes for “Shaddai,” or “the Rock;” often for “Adonai;” and most universally for “Jehovah,”

the undoubted proper name of God, and that to which the Greek translators, long before our Saviour's birth, had most appropriated the name of Lord, not only by way of explication, but distinction and particular expression ; as when we read, " thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high in all the earth." And as the original Jehovah was spoken of Christ by the holy prophets ; so the title of Lord, as the usual interpretation of that name, was attributed unto him by the apostles. In that signal prediction of the first age of the gospel, God promised by Joel, that " whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord (Jehovah) shall be delivered." And St. Paul hath assured us, that Christ is that Lord, by proving from thence, that " whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ;" and inferring from that, " if we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, we shall be saved." Joel ii. 32 ; Rom. x. 9. For if it be a certain truth, that whosoever confesseth the Lord Jesus shall be saved ; and the certainty of this truth depend upon that foundation, that " whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ;" and the certainty of that in relation to Christ depend upon that other promise, " whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved ;" then must *the Lord* in the 13th verse of the 10th chapter to the Romans, be the same with the Lord Jesus in the 9th verse, or else St. Paul's argument must be invalid and fallacious, as containing that in the conclusion which was not comprehended in the premises. But *the Lord* in the 9th verse is no other than Jehovah, as appear-eth by the prophet Joel, from whom the scripture is taken. Therefore our Saviour in the new testament is called Lord, as that name or title is the interpretation of Jehovah. In this dignified character the penitent thief worshipped the Son of God. It is really miraculous that this poor malefactor had more distinct views of the Deity of Christ than even the disciples themselves. He saw by faith the bright and effulgent rays of divinity shine through the dark clouds of his unexampled sufferings and ignominious death, and felt a confident persuasion that the man who was crucified between him and his fellow companion in crime, had done nothing amiss, and that he was no other than Jehovah. The Spirit of faith inspired him with boldness to offer up his humble prayer to the agonizing Jesus, and to breathe his departing and immortal soul into the hands of his dying Lord, who was strong in weakness ; glorious when

under reproach ; was the ever-living God when his body was dead ; and as able and willing to save the vilest of sinners who cry unto him for mercy, when he was hanging on the accursed tree, as he is now when reigning in heaven, and sitting upon the throne of his glory.

What a surprising instance of the rich, free, and sovereign grace of God ! Surely nothing is too hard for the Lord ! " For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." He freely acknowledges the justice of the sentence which doomed him and his fellow-sinner to an ignominious death, and rebukes him for continuing to rail against the suffering Messiah, saying, " Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss." And lest any should suppose that he died an unbelieving socinian, because he called Christ a man, he emphatically styles him " Lord," which is a general title of the King Messiah, and plainly showed that he believed him to be the rightful owner of a kingdom, possessing a sovereign power to bestow it upon whom he pleased. Listen attentively to his impressive and affecting prayer, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom ! "

This remarkable petition was speedily and graciously answered ; for such were the matchless love and boundless compassion of the Son of God, that he appears to forget his own unutterable tortures and inconceivable sorrows, to succour, relieve, and eternally save the expiring culprit :—" Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." When the Saviour had communicated to him the grace of true repentance, how singularly did he honour him by proclaiming him as the Lord of glory, at a time when he was betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another, and forsaken by all. The dying thief boldly professes the excellency of his name above every name, before an assembled world of wicked men, pharisaical hypocrites, and malignant fiends ! How vigorous and strong his faith ! When the Holy and Just One was loaded with reproach, scorn, and infamy, he confidently committed his immortal soul to his protection and care, whom he saw mighty to save even through weakness and death. By the cross Christ triumphed over principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly ; and " through death he destroyed him that had the power of

death." Nor was his confidence disappointed ; for his fervent desires were granted, and his most sanguine expectations fully realized. For the word of the Lord is true, which saith, " before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Christ was a Lord in his death as well as in his life, or he would not have been able to pluck this brand from eternal burnings, when he himself was enduring the most bitter pains of his vicarious and meritorious death. It was by these agonizing sufferings that he despoiled the last enemy of his sting, and conquered him in dying ; and in this mysterious and memorable conflict upon Mount Calvary, triumphantly declared himself to be the Prince of life, and the Lord of glory ! These gospel verities were revealed by the Spirit of Christ to the expiring criminal, and constituted the basis of his faith, and the only source of his consolation, until the solemn moment of his departure from a world of sin, temptation and sorrow, to the entrance of his happy spirit into the kingdom and joy of his Lord. Hence it is obvious, that when he committed his soul into the hands of the Saviour in the awful article of death, it was an act of the highest worship ; and had not the King of the Jews been properly and truly God, he would have been guilty of the grossest idolatry ; instead of receiving a blessing, he would have procured unto himself a curse. For it is written, " Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." I hesitate not to affirm, that this vessel of mercy brought more glory to Christ in the last moments of his life, than many professors do in the course of fifty years ! The grace of our Lord to him was exceeding abundant with faith and love, " for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." 1 Tim. i. 14 ; Rom. v. 20.

How astonishingly clear and scriptural were his views of the glorious person of Christ as God-man ! Any one might have imagined that he had heard the Saviour say, I am David's Lord and David's son : and had listened to the united testimonies of St. Peter and St. Paul, " But ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of Life :—which none of the princes of this world knew ; for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Acts iii. 14 ; 1 Cor. ii. 8. He was indeed a miracle of grace. In his salvation, the King of Zion

gave a most signal display of victorious grace ;—of his unchangeable love, when the love of others to him waxed cold ;—of infinite compassion, when no pity was shown to him ;—of succour and sympathy, when his rebellious creatures laughed at his misery, exulting in his ignominious death—only vexing themselves with satanic malice, because they were not able to make his sufferings more distressing and more reproachful. Had he possessed less than infinite forbearance, he would have consumed his enemies, and avenged himself of his adversaries. But he patiently endured the cross, and despised the shame. O may endless honour and glory be ascribed to thee, thou merciful, meek, and lovely Saviour : for “this is not after the manner of man, O Lord!”

Again, when we further contemplate the correctness of the confession of his faith in calling Christ, Lord, it is self-evident to every reflecting mind, favourable to truth, that he had a conspicuous view of the unsearchable riches of Christ, even through his deep poverty. At that mournful period, when the Prince of Life had not power to make a will of his vesture—nor could he distribute his plain garments among his needy disciples; yet he distinctly acknowledged him the possessor and disposer of a kingdom which is not of this world, but glorious and divine, abiding for ever; for “of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Surely we are compelled to exclaim, none can teach like the great Prophet of the church ! His wisdom is the wisdom of God, which maketh men wise unto salvation. For the success of his saving work, he is neither dependent on auspicious circumstances, nor confined to the ordinary use of means. If he chooses to work, who shall let or hinder it ? And “when his arm is stretched out, who shall turn it back ?” Mean and insignificant instruments, when he employs them, do not retard, but further the purposes of his love ; and those that are suitable and fitting are unavailable, unless he deigns to use and to bless them. Even the great and argumentative St. Paul may plant, and the eloquent Apollos water, but God must give the increase. That the Lord Christ gave such unequivocal proof of his Godhead in the conversion of this hardened rebel, and receiving his penitent soul into paradise, is a fact which none of the enemies of his Deity will ever with truth be able to deny, or in the least invalidate. That he looked to Christ on the cross as the God-man, there is

not the smallest doubt; though the Saviour was enduring the poignant and excruciating agonies of crucifixion, and the dreadful curse of the violated law of God in his righteous soul, for the sins of his people. In this exalted character, as the Surety of his church, he believed him mighty and willing to save the vilest of sinners who came to him, and firmly trusted all his immortal interests in his hands, knowing that they were eternally safe in his keeping. “I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands.” St. John x. 28. “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.” Psalm cxxv. 1.

It is also worthy of your serious consideration, that the dying thief did not say, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Father’s kingdom;” but, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into **THY KINGDOM!**” I desire you, my respected and attentive hearers, to bear in mind, that the Messiah had a twofold right to this kingdom. First. An original right with his Father, as God the Creator. The Holy Spirit declareth, that “the Logos, (or Word) was with God, and the Word was God: that all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” Again, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” Secondly. A donative right, which he acquired by completely accomplishing the stupendous work of salvation; and as a recompence for this vast undertaking, the Father assigned to him a kingdom; and our blessed Lord, as the surety and representative of the elect, has inviolably secured to them a kingdom. He hath obtained eternal redemption for us. Hence he says, “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.”

From the preceding incontrovertible fact of the dying thief presenting his fervent prayer to Christ in his last moments, we learn, that he most unquestionably believed him to possess the real and essential attributes of deity; and, consequently, he was an object of the most profound adoration. This is such a fundamental and important article of gospel faith, that all persons of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, taught of Jehovah, firmly believe, and cordially embrace, as absolutely necessary to the possession of salvation. Therefore, those persons or

professors who deny this truth, are no more entitled to the name of Christians, than Jews, Turks, or infidels ; and if the Saviour speaks the truth, living and dying in this woful state of infidelity, they will be as far from possessing eternal life as demons in outer darkness. " If ye believe not that I AM *he*, ye shall die in your sins."—" Whither I go, ye cannot come." Were I not able to adduce any other proofs corroborative of the deity of Christ, surely the foregoing testimonies would be deemed satisfactory evidence by all those who prefer the unerring word of God, to the vague and uncertain opinions of men. But socinianism, with other pestilential errors closely connected with it, both in this country and other parts of Christendom, is alarmingly upon the increase ; and fostered under the cant phrase of liberality of mind, which views all religious distinctions with a cold indifference, and the peculiar glories of the gospel as mere non-entities,—it surely becomes every faithful minister of the new testament, in these latter days of blasphemy and rebuke, to make a bold and decided stand against the vile encroachments and daring opposition of the motley hosts of the enemies of the truth, who are continually upon the alert to defy the armies of the living God ; for what they cannot carry by assault, they will, if possible, take by stratagem ; so that by smooth words and fair speeches, they have already led astray many who are sorely entangled in the yoke of bondage ; and others are awfully deceived to their own destruction. " In the latter times, some shall depart from the faith." Let, then, all Zion's watchmen, who are Israelites indeed, and love our Lord Christ in truth and sincerity, rouse themselves from the benumbing stupor of the present awful times of a general falling away from the truth ; and, with the vigilance and fidelity their solemn and overwhelmingly responsible work demands, affectionately, fearlessly, and earnestly contend for the ancient faith once delivered to the saints. We ought not to give place to the common enemy even for an hour, that the truths of the gospel may continue with us in their native simplicity and glory, that their unction and life-giving energy may be enjoyed in our hearts, by the grace and power of the Lord the Spirit. See Gal. ii. 4, 5. Rest assured, that the essential and all-important doctrines of the Godhead of Christ is the central point in which all the lines of divine revelation meet—the various declarations of the

Bible harmonize, and splendidly appear in all their overpowering majesty and combined glories, to the everlasting honour of a Three-One Jehovah, and the unspeakable comfort of every believer. Those are the worst of enemies that would despoil us of this only hope ; they resemble merciless pirates, who, having robbed the vessel of all her rich stores, at last sink the ship, without affording the perishing and miserable crew a plank on which they may escape the devouring gulf. Upon this only basis, the salvation of the church is built by the hands of the Eternal ; and if this principal foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do ? For upon this imperishable pillar rests the faith of God's elect. From this enriching source of life and joy, is derived all our consolation, dearest hopes, and immortal felicity. The nominal protestant churches, which are deprived of this pre-eminent gospel truth, and inestimable jewel, are comparable to a lifeless carcase, without an animating soul. " It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing—for the body without the spirit is dead." All that is lovely and fair in christianity is deformed ; their strength and beauty are departed ; and upon their eyelids are fixed the chilling shadow of moral death. There is nothing left but the outworks of christianity ; and upon them may be written " Ichabod—the glory is departed." Indeed, if Christ is not really and truly God, christians are, of all men, the most miserable ; for as their expectations are raised infinitely higher than any other sect, therefore their disappointment would be inconceivably greater. But this supposition is absolutely false. Their Saviour is God, blessed for ever ; and, therefore, true believers are the only happy persons ; " yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah of Hosts is his name." " Their rock is not like our rock ; our enemies themselves being judges." " Happy is the man who hath the God of Jacob for his help." If the scriptures are true, I explicitly declare, that socinians are as far removed from correct views of the person of Christ, as Mahometans, or any other infidels ; and were they consistent with themselves, they would not only be deists, but atheists ; for there are as many arguments to prove the deity of the Son, as there are the Godhead of the Father. In order to confute these gainsayers, as well as to establish the weak and wavering ; and for the edifica-

tion of those who love the honour and glory of Christ, their God and Redeemer, ineffably better than their own lives, I will present to their impartial and rigorous examination, the subsequent scriptural, and consequently unanswerable, demonstrations of the Godhead of the Saviour.

First. *Christ is absolutely called God in the sacred language of inspiration.* This position, the opposers of this doctrine obstinately deny; and contend, that whenever this term is applied to Jesus of Nazareth, it is to be taken in a figurative sense; or that he is God merely by appointment or office. But those who are disposed seriously to attend to the testimony of scripture, will easily detect the fallacy of their reasoning, and be not a little shocked at the daring impiety of those who, Judas like, say, "Hail, Master!" and at the same time, use every effort to degrade the Son of God to the rank of a dependent creature like themselves. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." The following texts strikingly assert the deity of Christ: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," John i. 1. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," Heb. i. 8. "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (or rather, as it ought to be translated, EVEN our Saviour Jesus Christ,") 2 Peter i. 1. "Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and (or EVEN) our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 4. The living and true God. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen," 1 St. John v. 20. Rev. i. 18. "The great and mighty God, the everlasting Father," Titus ii. 13—Isaiah ix. 6. "The only wise God," Jude 25. "The God of glory," Acts vii. 2. "God over all, blessed for ever," Romans ix. 5. "He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," 1 Tim. vi. 15.—Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 13—16. Finally, the sublime and incommunicable name of Jehovah is assumed by the Saviour, and positively ascribed to him by the Holy Spirit. "Before

Abraham was, I AM," John viii. 58. "For if ye believe not that I AM he, ye shall die in your sins," John viii. 24. "This is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness!" Jer. xxiii. 6. "For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name," Isaiah liv. 5.

I am well aware the hatred of the Socinians is so implacable against Christ, that these clear, harmonious scriptural testimonies, and consequently infallible proofs of his Deity, instead of convincing them of their soul-ruining errors, they put a fresh edge upon their subtlety, and endeavour to evade their force, by telling us that the foregoing divine titles are applied to the Son of God only in a qualified or secondary sense, as a magistrate, king, or emperor, is styled lord or god, as "There be gods many, and lords many." But I ask them, where do we read, in the sacred oracles, of a magistrate, king, or judge, being called god and lord, with such additional transcendent epithets as these, "The Mighty God! The everlasting Father! The living and true God! The Most High God! The only wise God! The God of glory! King of kings, and Lord of lords! The God of the whole earth! God over all, blessed for ever! Amen." Look, and search diligently, for in the volume of holy writ you will find no such horrid blasphemy.

Secondly. *The incommunicable attributes and perfections* of Jehovah are ascribed to him. To Christ, as God, belong *self-existence and absolute independence*. In this character, his being and nature are of himself. This cannot be asserted, with truth, of any mere creature, however high in the scale of creation. They are solely dependent on him for their existence and operation. "For in him we live, move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 28.—Exodus iii. 14.—Rev. i. 8, xvi. 5. "He is eternal without beginning, ending, or succession of duration," Prov. viii. 23—31; Micah v. 2; 1 John v. 7. He is the unchangeable God, in his nature, essence, and purpose, love, mercy, and faithfulness. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8, i. 12; Psalm cii. 24—27. He possesses almighty power, which is distinct from his mediatorial power that he received from the Father, which proves him to be God Almighty, Phil. iii. 20—21; Rev. xi. 17—22, xii. 13—20; Isaiah lxiii. 1.. He is omnipresent; but if he was a

mere creature, he could not be in more than one place at the same time. As man, he is confined at the right hand of God as much as my body is confined in this pulpit. But as God, he fills immensity; neither men, angels, nor devils, can flee from his all-penetrating presence. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there," Psalm cxxxix. 7—12; Matt. xviii. 20; Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3; St. John iii. 13. The Saviour is omniscient. He has an infinite and perfect knowledge of past, present, and future events. "He searches the hearts, and tries the reins of the children of men," Rev. ii. 23. "And needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man," St. John ii. 25, vi. 14, xxi. 17; St. Matt. ix. 4, xii. 25; Heb. i.; Col. ii. 3. It is also written, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "I and my Father are one," Phil. ii. 5, 6; Zech. xiii. 7; Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 15; St. John x. 30, xiv. 9, 10; 1 St. John v. 7.

Thirdly. *The works and actions which are proper only to God, are attributed to him.* Nothing takes place, or ever shall happen, either in time or eternity, but according to his decree and appointment, or permission. He created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." He preserves and governs all things by his infinite wisdom and almighty power. Miracles he accomplished by his own power, and in his own name. He has finished the work of human redemption,—a work he never could have accomplished, had he not been God. There are other divine actions which incontrovertibly prove his deity; such as sending the Holy Ghost—quickening the spiritually dead—applying to the consciences of convinced sinners his precious blood—justifying the ungodly—pardoning sin—sanctifying the hearts of his elect—causing them to persevere in a state of grace, and preserving their faith, until they receive its end, the salvation of their souls; raising the dead at the last day, and judging the world. Not one of these supernatural actions could he perform by his own power and wisdom, was he not the eternal God. Fervently pray for the Spirit of illumination, that you may understand, by his soul-enlightening rays,

the following revealed statements of irrefutable facts and indissolubly united testimonies, which you will find, upon a close examination, delightful confirmations of the above declarations : St. John i. 3; Prov. viii. 14, 15, 16; Rev. iv. 11; Heb. i. 3; Heb. xiii. 12; St. John xv. 26; St. John v. 25; Matt. ix. 2; Rom. iv. 5; Col. ii. 13; Phil. i. 6; St. John v. 28, v. 22.

Fourthly. The saints, in every age, have called upon the name of Christ, and worshipped him as the living and true God. It was a leading and prominent characteristic of the primitive christians, that they called upon the name of Jesus, and sung hymns of praise and thanksgiving unto Christ their King. When Saul of Tarsus was convinced of sin, and saw and felt his lost condition, the reality of his conversion was known by his calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus. This the apostle represents as an infallible proof of salvation. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." This heart-cheering evidence the blessed Stephen richly possessed, and pre-eminently enjoyed, amidst a deadly shower of stones, a few moments before he fell asleep, to enter unspeakable glory. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep." Acts vii. 59, 60.

Fifthly. The same worship and divine homage given to the Almighty Father are ascribed to his co-equal Son. Believers have the same trust in him ; there is no true faith in God the Father, as a covenant God, but through Christ, " who by him do believe in God." They love him with the same love ; render unto him the same obedience.—Those who lightly esteem Christ dishonour the Father ; and they " who worship the Son glorify the Father." " The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." " He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." We are charged with idolatry when we ascribe the same honour to the Saviour as we do to Almighty God. We reply, if we are guilty of idolatry in ascribing divine honour to the Son, we are neither without precept nor example for so doing—" When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

We are also in good company, for all the Lord's regenerated people on earth, the saints in glory, and the angels in heaven are idolaters.

If therefore to confide in Christ with the same confidence we trust in the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, and to render to him the same humble homage and devout adoration, be idolatry, I am determined through grace to live, and with the thief upon the cross to die, an idolater!

My respected hearers, carefully examine the subsequent testimonies of holy writ. Matt. viii. 2. Exod. xxiii. 21. Ps. cxix. 12. xlvi. 3, 5, 11. Matt. xviii. 19. Acts x. 48. xix. 5. Compare the 5th with the 7th chapter of Revelation.

Secondly. His PRAYER—“Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom!” How instantaneous and truly astonishing the change accomplished in the heart of this malefactor! the moment before he was a reviler, and railed upon the Saviour with the other thief and the murderers of Christ. “The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.” But from being a persecutor, he becomes an humble penitent, ingenuously confesses his sin, acknowledges the justice of the sentence of the law which condemned him to die, and rebukes his hardened fellow-sufferer. He then declares the innocence of the Messiah, and earnestly prays to be remembered by him when he entered his kingdom. The prayer of faith is the first favourable symptom and satisfactory evidence of spiritual life; and he that liveth in the constant neglect of this heavenly exercise, is dead while he liveth. Let this solemn and momentous fact never be forgotten, that the realization of the “spirit of grace and supplication,” enabling us to pour out our hearts to God, in earnest prayer, is as indispensably requisite to the essence, well-being, growth, and spiritual prosperity of the soul in the knowledge of sanctifying, saving, divine truth, and to every part of vital, experimental, and practical godliness, as the air we breathe is to the life and health of our bodies.

In the prayer of the dying culprit, there are three essential properties which are inseparably connected in the desires and petitions of every one taught by the Spirit of Christ

1. *A clear conviction of his lost and ruined condition as*

a sinner in the sight of God, as well as before men. The knowledge of ourselves as apostate rebels against Jehovah, is absolutely necessary if we would worship him acceptably. An outward invocation of his name without a sight and sense of our wants, is neither to pray in truth nor sincerity, and is only to mock God with a solemn sound, while our hearts are far from him : it is mere lip service, and bodily exercise, which profiteth nothing. See Matt. xv. 8. This humble worshipper was far removed from the company of these painted hypocrites. He felt the weight of his transgressions to be an intolerable burden, too heavy for him to bear ; and saw himself like the publican, unworthy to lift up his eyes to heaven, when he smote upon his breast, saying, “God be merciful (or propitious) to me a sinner.” Many on account of the abhorrent views they have of themselves because of their sins, are fearfully discouraged and sorely tempted to think that they have neither part nor lot in the living Redeemer, and that they shall one day or other prove castaways. It would be well for these afflicted people to know, that he who sees the odious nature of sin, detests its polluting streams, desires to be cleansed from them in the blood of Christ, and to live to the glory of God, is undoubtedly under a saving work of grace, though at present, through the weakness of his faith, and the strength of inbred corruption, he cannot enjoy the comfort and blessedness of his state. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Recollect the light of nature, or human agency, can no more convince a person of his sins, than it can convert or turn him from his sins unto God. It belongs as much to the province of the Holy Spirit to shew a man the depravity of his nature, and to give him to feel the plague of his heart, as it is his office in the mysterious economy of redemption to reveal the glories of Christ, and to sprinkle upon the guilty conscience of his contrite people his peace-speaking blood. “Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.” “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” “And when he is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” This is

the established gospel method of setting a sinner free who is tied and bound with the chain of his sins. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." To groan under spiritual bondage, is infinitely preferable to false liberty. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." But when this deliverance has been accomplished, the happy soul possesses celestial freedom, though its body may be nailed to the fatal tree. Its noble and triumphant song is "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." "I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation."

2. *The penitent thief was deeply sensible, that had God left him for ever to perish in his sins, he would have been just, and that his situation was so deplorable that vain was the help of creatures.* When he affectingly cried, "Lord, remember me," he desired that he would extend to him, the chief of sinners, his sovereign, free, and rich mercy. This was his only plea. He knew that he had violated the laws of God and man, and deserved to be cut off from the land of the living, and die eternally. "He saw his kinsfolks and companions stand aloof," Ps. xxxviii. 11. unable to help him, had they been willing; and if they at all remembered him, it would be to consider him a reprobate character, and a disgrace to society. The sword of justice was removing him from the face of the earth in the midst of his days; and his former wicked associates in crime, on this account would be glad to forget him, lest a recollection of his ignominious end should remind them of their own deserved punishment, and imbitter the short pleasures of sin by a serious consideration of its dreadful wages—death, temporal and eternal. Christ then is the last and never-failing refuge of a ruined and convinced sinner. This poor penitent could adopt the language of the Psalmist, as remarkably suitable to his forlorn condition—"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, thou art my refuge." Ps. cxlii. 4, 5. Had he looked to all the hosts of heaven, and cried unto them to relieve and save him, they would have replied, O perishing sinner! in us there is no salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but by Jesus

Christ. "This is a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father." Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. To this Almighty Person he was enabled to look ; he " looked unto him and was lightened, and his face was not ashamed." See Ps. xxxiv. 5.

Though the Son of God is such a merciful and incomparable Saviour, such is the native pride of the human heart, and the enmity of the mind against salvation by grace, that not one of the children of Adam will go to him for mercy until pressing necessity brings them. It is only the needy and defenceless that gladly "embrace the rock for want of a shelter." The poor in spirit, who are too much impoverished to bring money in their sacks, and the weak, who cannot bring in their basket, a price through the labour of their hands, therefore they gratefully receive the corn of heaven, "without money, and without price." These are divinely nourished, and satisfactorily fed upon the finest of the wheat. Their troubled and fainting hearts rejoice to hear that Christ Jesus came into the world, according to the Father's eternal purpose, to seek and to save that which was lost ; that the provisions of the gospel were prepared for them and them only. The Master of the feast kindly invites the hungry to partake of the bread of life, and freely to receive this immortal food, saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

3. He believed that the God-man Redeemer, the glorious Person he had just been reviling, was the only sure hiding-place and safe retreat from the impending storm of a violated law, and the unutterable pain of the wrath to come, and that he would afford shelter and protection to all those who trusted in his blood and righteousness. To this end, he earnestly applied to him for mercy, crying, "Lord, remember me." He was well convinced that he should be for ever secured from all danger, in the protecting arms of his invincible power and love.

Ever bear in mind, my respected hearers, that spiritual

prayer is preceded by faith—"How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?" "Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. True faith views Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, without the aid of good works, or the intervention of saints or angels. This self-convicted perishing sinner fled directly to Christ for salvation. His faith beheld him, the all-sufficient Saviour, without the co-operation of good works, or the interposition of saints or angels. It is worthy of remark, that he did not look to a popish mediatrix, mediator, or intercessor. He did not pray, 'O blessed mother of God! O sacred Virgin Mary, remember me! O St. Gabriel, holy angels, and all ye heavenly powers, remember me! nor did he cry, O St. Peter, remember me!' As it regards poor Peter, he could not remember himself, excepting with detestation and abhorrence, for his perfidious and treacherous conduct to his suffering and unchangeable Friend. After having thrice denied him, "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly." This humble penitent was better taught than thus to idolize the creature. His prayer was directed to the Lord, who alone was able and willing to save to the uttermost, from all evil to all good; and to receive his deathless soul into paradisaical happiness. This spiritual desire, like all the prayers of God's regenerated family, was indited in his heart by the Spirit of Christ, and was nothing less than the fervent breathings of the new-born babe of grace.

Further, God may be said to remember the wicked in fearful visitations of his anger, when he marks their transgressions, and punishes them for their sins. All those who know the immaculate purity of God's law, and the exceeding sinfulness of their nature, deprecate this remembrance, importunately praying, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" But he remembers his people in a gracious manner, when he takes special notice of them, and delights to do them good, reveals the secrets of his heart, and makes known to them by his

word and Spirit, that they are the peculiar objects of his love, tender regard, and never-failing faithfulness ; when he accomplishes his purposes, fulfils his promises, and remembers his holy covenant. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." Thus he mercifully remembered Noah, for he found grace in his sight, when he saved him and all his household from the inundation of his righteous vengeance, which buried the ungodly world in a watery grave. The same kindness he shewed Lot when he remembered his faithful servant Abraham, and delivered him and his two daughters from the fierce and dreadful tempest of brimstone and fire which consumed the wicked Sodomites. From the days of Noah, when the set time to remember Zion is come, he points to the bow in the cloud, an emblem of his inviolable faithfulness, and saith, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." When his people think upon his name with delight and admiration, trust in him in a time of trouble, or look to their covenant God for pardon, peace, holiness, and all other spiritual blessings, rest assured it is because he thinks upon them, and has indelibly written their names in the book of his remembrance. In these respects, the penitent thief humbly besought the Son of God to remember him. As if he had said, "do not, mighty Saviour, forget me in the awful extremity of my distress, but think upon me for good ; for out of the belly of hell I cry unto thee ; O Lord, remember me according to thy goodness, and the multitude of thy tender favours."—"Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord."—My sins and aggravating transgressions have reached unto the heavens, but thy mercies are above the heavens. My calamitous case is helpless in itself, and far beyond the reach of creatures, and absolutely desperate to all but thyself. If thou, gracious Redeemer, deign to remember me, I care not if friends forsake and finally forget me ; my drooping spirit and dying heart "shall rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation." Yea, glorious Saviour, though flesh and heart are now failing, and in a few moments my sorrowful eyes will be closed in death, and the pomps and grandeur of this perishing world will for ever disappear, yet will I fear no evil, "for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff

they comfort me ; for thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The Lord remembers his people when he visits them with his spiritual presence, richly bestowing upon them new covenant favours, and blessing them with the soul-cheering light of his smiling countenance. He freely remembers these vessels of mercy after his loving-kindness, and forgets nothing but their sins : " for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Job and the Psalmist desired in this sense to be remembered by the Lord ; and had they been on earth with the suppliant thief, they would willingly have united with him in his fervent devotions. The former prayed, " appoint me a set time, and remember me." And the latter cried, " remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest to thy people : O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen ; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation ; that I may glory with thine inheritance." And as these two spiritual worshippers were heard, so was the dying thief ; which leads me in the second place to

The consideration of our Lord's prompt and gracious answer, " Verily, I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

In this reviving and unspeakable glorious promise, are contained four special blessings, which demand our serious attention. First, *he promised to this vessel of mercy, that he should be with him in paradise.* Some have imagined, that the soul of Christ, during its state of separation from the body, descended literally and locally into hell ; it is more than probable that they forgot this text, or that they did not correctly understand it. Nor are we vainly to suppose with Bellarmine, the great Goliath of the papists, that his human soul descended into purgatory, to fetch up the souls of the patriarchs from thence ; no, the word paradise undoubtedly signifies heaven, into which the souls of the faithful enter immediately after death, and where the immaculate spirit of Christ went the moment it quitted the painful tabernacle, and there rested until the third day, when it re-entered his dead but incorruptible body, to live together in an indissoluble union for evermore. Yet, although the dying Redeemer thus entered the peaceful abodes of the blessed, it must be maintained, according to the word of God, he did not possess that pre-eminent

degree of happiness and glory to which he was exalted at the expiration of forty days from his resurrection. He then ascended to his Father, having finished the work of human redemption; was made higher than the heavens, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Eph. iv. 8. Heb. i. 3.

During the period to which I have alluded, the risen Messiah conversed with his disciples, expounded to them the writings of the prophets, who spoke of the mysteries of the cross, and his triumphant resurrection, and revealed to them more distinctly and clearly the nature and glory of his kingdom. The truth of the foregoing observations is also confirmed by our Lord's admonition to Mary Magdalene, to whom he first appeared at the sepulchre, and made himself known unto her. "Jesus saith unto her, touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

The term paradise, taken in its full and comprehensive acceptation, denotes the third or highest heaven, the residence of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, saints and angels, which St. Paul emphatically calls paradise. 2 Cor. xii. 4. This word expressly sets forth the happy state of departed saints, both before and after the resurrection, of which the lovely garden of Eden was a figure. Let us briefly glance at the resemblance between them, and point out the vast superiority of the one to the other.

The earthly paradise was planted by Jehovah for our once innocent and happy parents; and in their primitive state they rejoiced to hear his voice. The heavenly Eden was prepared by a God of grace from the foundation of the world, for all his children, where they will enjoy uninterrupted communion with the sacred Trinity for ever. In the earthly paradise, there was a beautiful and fertilizing river, which watered the garden, and made it fruitful. In the heavenly paradise there is a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, and its refreshing streams now make glad the people of the Most High, and will do to all eternity. In the earthly paradise there was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the heavenly paradise the tree of life bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; and the leaves are for the

healing of the nations. It produces no prohibited fruit; all the ransomed are invited to partake of it, and are nourished to an endless life. The immunities of the heavenly paradise are far superior to the earthly. There is also an eternal exclusion of evil from the former, to which the latter was exposed, and by which it was lost. In the heavenly glory there is no danger of falling into the abyss of misery: "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out." Rev. iii. 12. The mortal poison of sin shall not enter there. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. xxi. 27. No subtle serpent shall be permitted to approach the holy inhabitants of the celestial country, nor molest their tranquil spirits with his hellish temptations: "The accuser of the brethren is cast down; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Pain and pining sickness of body, sorrow and vexation of mind, death and the curse of the law, the fruits of sin, shall be known no more. God himself will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his glorified family: "they shall hunger no more; neither shall they thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 16, 17.

In the sublime and striking images employed by the Holy Ghost to set forth the glories of the celestial paradise, it is styled, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" in opposition to the earthly and perishable buildings of this lower world. It contains many mansions of unspotted purity and rest, in which the redeemed of the Lord shall reign for ever. It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. How unlike the transitory good things of this frail life, which perish in the using, and often pierce their unhappy possessors through with many sorrows. It is described as "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Its foundations are immoveable, being the everlasting love of Jehovah, the unalterable covenant of redemption, and the Rock of Ages. It is called "the kingdom of heaven," where all its

subjects are "kings and priests unto God and his Father." Rev. i. 6. Their crowns are styled—crowns of life, crowns of righteousness, and crowns of glory, which fade not away, James i. 12, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 1 Pet. v. 4. They are appointed to reign on thrones of glory; for thus saith the Lord, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down on my Father's throne." And again, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," Rev. iii. 21.—xxi. 7.

Secondly. *Our Lord not only promised to the dying thief the possession of heaven, but also the enjoyment of his unspeakable glorious presence,* "Thou shalt be WITH ME in paradise." This is the crowning blessing of all others. If it were not for this additional glory, heaven itself would not be desirable to the children of God; all its sweetness would be lost, and its splendour imperceptible. It is the presence of the king constitutes the court, whether it is in a cottage or a palace. The world to come would be a solitary wilderness, a desert of wants which no created fulness could supply without the glorious presence of our covenant God and lovely Redeemer. The person who is convinced of the vanity and unsatisfactory nature of sublunary things, and experimentally knows what it is to enjoy in this vale of tears that peculiarly transcendent blessing, the spiritual presence of Christ, can unite with the Psalmist in his elevated devotional ardour, and sublime appeal to his Almighty Friend, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" Psalm lxxiii. 25. To be with Christ in paradise, implies a sight of his personal glory as God-man, and the enjoyment of his majestic presence connected with endless duration. First, they shall see the exalted Redeemer in his personal and mediatorial glory. Now they "walk by faith, not by sight," and only see "through a glass darkly," a few glimpses of his glory; yet these inspire them with fervent desires to depart from a world of sin and warfare, tribulation and death, "to be with Christ, which is far better." For then they "shall see him as he is," and shall, "know even as we are known." No mists of sin and unbelief shall then cloud the bright and resplendent rays of his lovely countenance, which constitutes the felicity of saints and the glory of heaven!

One of the ancients said to his friend, ‘when thou hast seen Solon, I shall have shown thee all the glory of Greece.’ The instant the soul enters rest, and sees Christ, he will have seen all the glory of paradise. “ He is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” If the church, when she had only a sight of him by faith, rapturously exclaimed, “ Yea, he is **ALTOGETHER LOVELY**,” what will she say when he appears in the full blaze of his mediatorial glory ? This is the astonishing representation of heaven given by him who possessed an infinite knowledge of it, and equitably demands of his Father in the character of our righteous Advocate in behalf of his elect people : “ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” From this animating description of heaven we learn, that its happiness will chiefly consist in beholding with our immortal eyes the glory of Christ, and in singing the ceaseless praises of a Three-One God.

My christian friends, were these ‘heart-reviving truths more powerfully felt, and through the unction of the Holy Spirit more exemplified in our walk and conversation, we should not view death with such fear and dismay, but rather welcome its approach, for this stingless enemy will be the means of bringing us to our heavenly home, to dwell with him whom our souls love. We read that when Socrates was at the point of death, he comforted himself with this consideration, that he was going to the place where he should see Homer, and other wise men who lived in the ages before him. And shall a heathen philosopher receive more consolation in death from the thought of being with other pagans, than christians in the reviving thought of being with the blessed Saviour ? God forbid. Did Homer die ;for Socrates ? Were they not both without God, without Christ, and without a well-grounded hope in the world to come ? O believer, take care that you do not dishonour your Lord by a stoical apathy, and frigid affections, which many heathens have not had in reference to their departed companions, their idol-gods, and false deities.

2. Those that are with Christ in paradise not only see but enjoy communion with him. This divine fruition is inseparably connected with his glorious présence, as spiritual joy is with his gracious presence. Here our

comforts go and come ; they ebb and flow like the tides. To a heaven-bound traveller fair weather is as uncertain as an April day : one hour a bright sun and clear sky, the next overshadowed with clouds, windy storm, and tempest, Ps. lv. 8. But the celestial joys in our Father's house are permanent and abiding. In this land of sin and sorrow, when we are keenly exercised with afflictions and temptations, our spirits droop, and our hearts faint. The difficulties of the way are many and insupportable to flesh and blood : often the believer is constrained to cry out, " Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit, for my sighs are many and my heart is faint. When wilt thou come unto me ? Do not forget me, O Lord !" These heavy complaints will not be heard in heaven, for the saints shall not only behold the Saviour, but shall be glorified with him. The scriptures affirm that glory shall not merely be revealed to *them*, but in *them*, Rom. viii. 17. The King of Zion says to every one of his blood-bought family, immediately upon the separation of the soul from the body, " Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is his joy, for he is the author, object, and source of it. " Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright." O what a delightful day will that be when all " the ransomed of Jehovah shall come and return to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," Isa. xxxv. 10.

3. *To be with Christ in paradise, denotes an endless duration of unspeakable happiness.* The fashion of this world passeth away. Here we have no continuing city. This place is not our rest, it is polluted. Misery and woe are entailed upon the man whose only hope is in this life. The good things confined within the narrow span of time are comparable to a sea of glass, brittle and deceitful : it is mingled with fire, and will soon be consumed. " The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up," 2 Pet. iii. 10. How different the portion of the righteous ! In the end of the world they shall receive

the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies. These shall be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God. He saith to them, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "Because I live ye shall live also; and behold I am alive for evermore." The eternity of hell torments is the gnawing worm, and the fire unquenchable, which fills the damned with black despair and inconceivable anguish. And the saints reigning with Christ in glory everlasting, constitutes the heaven of heavens, and will cause their songs to be perpetual for the completing that felicity which is worthy their gracious God to bestow. Let us hear the crowning epithets of this heavenly paradise. It is *eternal life—eternal glory—an eternal weight or mass of glory—a crown of glory that fadeth not away—an eternal house—an eternal inheritance, and an everlasting kingdom.* Well might the apostle close his discourse upon a subject which has no end, with these consoling words, "So shall we be *ever with the Lord*; wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Thirdly. *The time when this promise was made.* The converted thief desired Christ to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." The remarkably gracious answer was suitable to this extraordinary prayer; in which the expiring petitioner was assured that the Lord would not only remember him in paradise, but that *very day* he should be with him. It is also observable, that when our Saviour spake the word, it was about the sixth hour of the day, which corresponds with our noon; consequently the day was half gone; and how delightful to him the reflection when in the agonies of death, to know before its expiration he should be with the Lord in his kingdom of ineffable joys. There is something, my attentive hearers, so surprising in the Saviour's prompt reply to the request of the dying thief, that the exceeding riches of sovereign grace displayed in it beggars all description! Had he been a faithful servant of righteousness all his days, he could not have made to him a more glorious promise. Were we to judge after the manner of men, we should be inclined to think the Son of God was addressing some eminent saint who

from love to him had borne the burden and heat of the day, and for his sake was laying down his life, and not a man who was a notorious highwayman in heart when first nailed to the cross. Did the Saviour say to him, Thou hast been a wicked malefactor ; for thy heinous crimes thou art transfixed to the ignominious tree ; ever since thou hast been suspended there, thou hast united with thy miserable companion and my cruel murderers in reviling me ? No. Blessed be his name, he upbraideth not, for he hateth putting away. Neither did he reply, I will surely show thee mercy, but I intend to consign thee first to the yawning gulf of perdition for a few years, that the flames of purgatory may purify thy polluted soul. “ Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth ! ” to the confusion of devils, the mortification of self-righteous pharisees, the encouragement of broken-hearted sinners, and the joy of angels, the adorable Redeemer answers, “ Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.”

There are persons who imagine that the souls of the righteous and the wicked fall asleep when separated from the body, and are in an unconscious state of existence until the resurrection morn. And they have been very much perplexed with this text, because it absolutely contradicts their unfounded and unreasonable supposition ; therefore *they cavil at the punctuation, and remove the comma from the pronoun thee, and place it after the phrase to-day, contending that it ought to be pointed thus,—“ Verily, I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in paradise.” This alteration restricts the day to the time when our Lord spake these words ; instead of denoting the time when the converted thief was to enter his kingdom ; and leaves the exact period undetermined, when he was to enter glory, in the vague declaration, “ Thou shalt be with me in paradise”* at some distant undetermined future period. If this impious conduct is pursued, and this unwarrantable licence permitted in interpreting the word of God, farewell common sense and unchangeable truth ! If the uncertain notions of fallible men are to be preferred before the simple and plain testimony of scripture, there are no delusions, however absurd, but what might be inculcated as consistent with the inspired volume, according to the wild reveries of men of corrupt minds, who wrest the scripture to their own destruction, because they hate the light, and

receive not the truth in the love of it. Materialists, who deny the *immateriality and immortality* of the soul, belong to this class of persons, and erroneously conjecture that the soul is inactive from the period of its separation from the body until the last day. This Socinian hypothesis is as unphilosophical as it is anti-scriptural. The soul is a thinking being, and can no more be divested of thought, than matter can be deprived of solidity, or of length and breadth, which are essential properties of all bodies, as much as a conscious state of being is absolutely requisite to the essence of the soul of man, which is an immortal spirit. The soul-sleeping system has a baneful influence upon the conduct of worldly men ; it lulls the guilty conscience in its slumbers, and calls in question the final day of retribution, and thus hardens the wicked in their sins. For if the spirit falls asleep with the body, where is the scripture to prove that it shall be raised again ? Upon the admissibility of this supposition, the fatal and delusive doctrine of the soul's ETERNAL SLEEP must be irrefutably established, which is all the heaven the ungodly desire. They " shall seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them," Rev. ix. 6. What a gloomy and discouraging aspect it presents to unbelievers, in reference to their departed christian friends and relatives, whose souls it represents as locked up in the cold embrace of death, as incapable of happiness as their bodies ; and therefore it robs them of the joyous and pleasing remembrance of the gospel fact of being with Christ in glory. With respect to believers themselves, according to this chilling scheme, how truly comfortless the prospect of death ! Far better would it be for them to remain in this wilderness of sorrow and affliction, where they often enjoy the gracious presence of their God, in his service, which is perfect freedom ; and frequently have their spirits refreshed, and their hearts delighted with the soul-cheering visits of their Almighty Friend, than enter a state of inactivity and unconscious existence. This benumbing chimera flatly contradicts the word of God, and therefore ought to be rejected by all real christians, with merited disdain and holy detestation. The unerring language of inspiration is explicit. The ungodly antediluvians and Sodomites are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. 1 Peter iii. 19, 20. Jude 7. The rich glutton that fared sumptuously every day, and

despised poor Lazarus, is lifting up his eyes in hell, being tormented with unquenchable flames of brimstone and fire, St. Luke xvi. 25. O who can fall asleep amidst devouring fire ; and who can slumber tortured in everlasting burnings ? "The sinners in Zion are afraid ; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?" "For the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever." Though the immortality of the soul is indescribably dreadful to the wicked, it is a theme which causes the troubled hearts of the righteous to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. When Moses and Elias conversed with Christ upon the mount of transfiguration, upon the sublime mysteries of the cross, they certainly were not asleep. The happy spirits of just men made perfect, who serve God in his temple without being weary, though they rest not day nor night, are far from being in an unconscious state. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ;" and when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. It was this animating and sure hope of the faithful entering glory immediately their souls leave the body, caused St. Paul to say, though he enjoyed such an elevated degree of communion with God, equal to any saint upon earth, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." The thought of reigning with his Almighty Friend, inspired him to sing in the prospect of martyrdom, with all its attending evils, "None of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed against that day." These divine verities the martyrs of Jesus firmly believed and vitally experienced. Through the energy of the Holy Ghost, they were enabled to maintain the all-important truths of the gospel with such unshaken constancy and intrepidity of spirit, that in *these days of modern refinement and liberalism*, the worldly-minded and fashionable professors of every sect, would have denounced them as *obstinate bigots, wild fanatics, and absolute madmen*. But they loved not their lives unto the death, that they might obtain a better resurrection ; and our Lord declares, "He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth

his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal," St. John xii. 25. These noble witnesses, of whom the world was not worthy, possessed the enjoyment of the full assurance of faith; and a hope, fraught with a blessed immortality, fired their zeal with a celestial flame, the floods of the enemy could never quench—which was stronger, and shone brighter than the fierce flames that consumed their mortal bodies. Listen attentively, and you will hear them sing the song of triumphant victory in the midst of cold, hunger, nakedness, famine, pestilence, and in the face of devouring fires, the sword, and death : " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We now proceed, fourthly and lastly, to the truth and infallible certainty of this consoling promise, " Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Verily, or as it is sometimes translated, amen, is of itself a pure Hebrew word, signifying firmness, stability, faithfulness ; it is expressive of consent or desire, so be it ; in this sense it concludes prayers, and also thanksgivings, St. Matt. vi. 13. Rom. xv. 33. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Rom. xi. 36. xvi. 27. It is used as a word of affirmation ; in truth, verily it is so. St. Matt. v. 18, 26. vi. 2. In this signification we are to understand it in the text. It is likewise worthy of your marked attention (according to the observation of a learned critic) *that no one but our blessed Redeemer ever uses it in the New Testament at the beginning of a sentence as a definite word of affirmation.* Yet in this sense it concludes all the four gospels. It is also applied to our blessed Lord as a noun, which was to certify to the mind of all repentant sinners, that he not merely spake the truth, but that he was the unerring and infinite Fountain of truth.—"These things saith the AMEN, the faithful and true witness." Rev. iii. 14. In this character as the faithful Saviour, he is indeed unyielding firmness and immutable stability — neither smiles nor frowns—pleasures nor pains—prosperity nor adversity—

could ever cause him for a moment to relinquish what he had undertaken to accomplish for the salvation of his people, and the glory of God, when he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He courageously travelled the path of unexampled tribulation alone. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." The treachery of friends and the implacable hatred of his evil and relentless enemies, combined and strengthened with the craft and assaults of the devil, could not in the least influence his stedfast and faithful heart to give up that cause which was dearer to him than his life, namely, the stupendous undertaking of human redemption, which he emphatically calls his Father's business; a work far exceeding in wisdom, power, grace and glory the heavens and the earth. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Ever bear in mind that the merciful declarations of the Son of God, are not like the pompous promissory affirmations of deceptive men, who mean nothing but words, nor do they resemble the vain shadows, and empty bubbles of this perishing world, that is rapidly passing away, which disappoint our hopes, and blight our expectations; no: they contain imperishable and eternal realities, and enrich the believer with all the unsearchable riches of Christ, which never fade away, and ultimately bring the saints to the possession of those blessed mansions, where sin, sorrow, and tribulation, cannot enter, and where they will for ever triumphantly reign with their exalted Redeemer, in his glorious kingdom, in all the bloom of immortal youth. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Our divine Redeemer and exalted Sovereign Lord will in the language of triumphant joy welcome home all his redeemed family, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

That the invariable faithfulness of the Saviour was confirmed by this significant word *verily*, to the comfort of the convicted malefactor, upon which he simply depended, even in his last breath, will be easily ascertained, if we

attend to our blessed Lord's usual method of introducing to the notice of his hearers some mighty and important truth. I have only time to furnish you with one illustration of the foregoing remarks; and it is in reference to the gospel doctrine of the new birth; the veracity of which no real christian can doubt, no more than he can doubt the existence of a God. The Lord Jesus introduces this all-important subject to Nicodemus, in the following impressive and emphatic manner—" *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" And to assure the penitent thief of the truth of his declaration, he saith, "*verily;*" or "*amen,* I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." As if he had said, As certain as I am the faithful and true Witness, thou shalt not be deceived in reposing implicit and unlimited confidence in me; for I most solemnly affirm, as thy dying Saviour, and the ever-living Jehovah, that I will receive thy deathless soul in *a few hours* into the kingdom of my glory. And has not every returning prodigal, I ask, the same solid ground of confidence? Why should any believing sinner doubt the fulfilment of his gracious and free promise of pardon, peace, life, and salvation, when the blessed Jesus is faithfulness itself? Remember,

*"The voice that rolls the stars along,
Speaks all the promises."*

And finally, it is written, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, amen, unto the glory of God by us."

Having now shown you, my friends, a little of the exceeding riches of divine grace in the conversion and salvation of one of the thieves who was crucified with our Lord; this monument of mercy will be a standing proof to the end of time, or the last burning day, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.

The young man, whose name I have before mentioned, in some measure experienced the efficacy of the same grace, in opening his eyes to see and feel his condition as a lost sinner, and working in his heart true repentance, that (with others who attended him) I have reason to believe, like the penitent thief, he is now with Christ in everlasting glory. A week before he suffered, his eldest brother called upon me with the melancholy intelligence;

and told me, that he was using every effort—that three petitions had been sent to Mr. Secretary Peel, very respectably signed, in order to obtain a commutation of punishment to transportation for life; but they were all unavailable, because the judge who tried him refused to sign them, for the following reasons:—1. Because he had been in prison before, for buying stolen poultry. 2. Because he manifested a degree of hardihood on his trial unbecoming his awful situation, which was particularly marked by the judge and the court; but I have since been credibly informed, that this arose more from his natural manner, than a design to behave unseemly. 3. He was connected with a gang of nightly depredators; and as sheep-stealing is now practised to an alarming extent, the judges are determined to punish the offenders with the utmost severity of the law, in order to deter others from the commission of the crime, and those of a similar nature. He had been to hear me preach in Bury Street Chapel, about three years ago, when his attention was more than usually arrested, and he appeared deeply to regret that circumstances obliged him to return into the country, lest he should be again entangled with his wicked companions, and brought to ruin. Alas! his fears were too well founded! Knowing that the poor young fellow was under sentence of death, and that there was no hope for him in this life, as he was appointed to die in a few days, I sent him a plain letter, in which I briefly pointed out his wretched condition as a sinner before God; earnestly and affectionately exhorted him, under a sense of his guilt and aggravating transgressions to flee from the wrath to come, fervently praying to Christ for mercy, and trusting in him alone for pardon, holiness, and eternal life, who died for the ungodly.

As it may not be deemed irrelevant by the generality of my readers, I present them with a copy of the letter, which is as follows:

March 27, 1829.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am indeed unspeakably grieved to hear of your truly calamitous and awful condition. It is my fervent prayer, that the Lord Jesus Christ would be pleased to have mercy upon you, and work in your heart by his Holy Spirit true repentance unto eternal life. Amen. As there is not the least hope for you in this miserable world, I most

earnestly and affectionately beseech you, not to lose a moment of time in praying to God, in the blessed name of the Lord Jesus, that he may open your eyes, and let you see and feel your *sinful state* by nature and practice. Ever recollect, we are all vile sinners against God, whether *we know it or not*; that all mankind are born in sin, so that we have gone astray from God ever since we had a being, and we are all both unable and unwilling to return unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our never-dying souls. This being the helpless state of all the children of Adam, we cannot possibly be saved because of any goodness in us, for we have all gone out of the way of truth, "There is none righteous, no, not one." See Romans, chap. 3. Never forget, then, that you are a poor, ruined, and lost sinner: that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, *even the chief!* Therefore, whatever your iniquities may be, *you can be but the chief of sinners!* You ought not to despair, as long as it is written, "*The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin.*" 1 St. John ii. 7. The greater sinner you see and feel yourself to be, the more welcome you are to come to the all-sufficient Saviour, who hath faithfully promised, "**HIM THAT COMETH UNTO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.**" St. John vi. 37.

My fellow-sinner, fall down on your knees before God, and humbly confess your sins, and constantly beg of him in the name of Jesus Christ to have mercy upon you a miserable sinner. In your prayers plead the above-mentioned promise of the Saviour, made to all them who are enabled to come by faith to him. I hope you feel your sins great and numerous, but remember they are not as great as the Almighty Saviour. He is infinitely more able to save you from sin, hell, and everlasting destruction, than all your spiritual enemies are able to destroy. Should you groan under the weight and burden of your sins, saying, They are too heavy a burden for me to bear; pray to the all-merciful Jesus, and all-sufficient Redeemer, that he would be pleased to give you grace to come unto him by faith, and help you to cast your burden upon him; then you will find rest for your weary soul.

Read with humble and fervent prayer the encouraging *promise* which the Lord Jesus hath graciously made to *you*, and all other sinners, who are crying out, "*What must we do to be saved?*" Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30. If you are tempted at any time to think that your sins are too great

to be forgiven, you should remember that the Son of God has pardoned as great sinners as ever you were. I can assure you from holy writ, that if you by faith and prayer trust in the person, blood and righteousness of the Son of God, the Almighty Friend of sinners, " though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isaiah i. 18. *What think you of the dying thief upon the cross, Mary Magdalene, wicked Manasseh, the publican, and the three thousand that crucified and murdered the Lord of glory?* These are all saved ; and Christ is as able and as willing to save you, if you put your whole trust in him. I most earnestly beg of you never to deceive yourself by *vainly* imagining that God will show you mercy (or any other sinner) for any good thing you may think you can perform, for all that the best of men can do is mixed with sin, and deserves eternal death. Neither think for a moment that you can make your *peace with God*, no more than you can *satisfy* the violated laws of your country without suffering death. If you believe in Jesus Christ, he will show to your unspeakable joy and comfort, that he has for ever made your *peace with God* by shedding his precious blood, and thereby given complete satisfaction to his heavenly Father for all your sins. See Eph. 2nd chapter, particularly from the 8th verse to the end. Read also the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel ; also the 18th chapter, and the 7th chapter beginning at the 36th verse to the end, 23rd chapter from verse 39 to 50. See Isa. 55th chapter, read with humble prayer the whole chapter, particularly the 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9th verses.

And may the Lord by his Holy Spirit open your understanding, that you may know these scriptures which show you the way of salvation. Read the tracts also, and lend them to your fellow-prisoners. I shall be glad to hear when your brother returns that you are looking only to the Lord Jesus for life and eternal salvation in the world to come.

From your real friend and well-wisher,

HENRY HEAP.

To JOSIAH PAYNE,
Condemned Cell, Maidstone Gaol,
KENT.

This letter the Rev. Mr. Winter, the chaplain of the prison, read to him twice, and helped him to find out the different portions of Scripture to which I referred as ap-

plicable to his case, and every sensibly lost sinner; and with great kindness and fidelity expounded the passages, which were greatly blessed to him.

The earnest exhortations of the Rev. Mr. Winter were the means through the unction of the divine Spirit of bringing him to a deep sense of his lost condition as a sinner, after the awful sentence of death was pronounced, which terminated, we have solid grounds to believe, in true repentance. Of the kind and unremitting attention of the chaplain, and the anxious solicitude he manifested for the salvation of his immortal soul, poor Paine spoke to me in pleasing and very grateful terms. Well would it be if all the prisons in London and the country, yea, and all the churches and chapels too, were favoured with such an able, affectionate, and excellent minister of Jesus Christ. As their numbers are comparatively few, and the harvest is great, may the Lord of the harvest send forth more faithful labourers into the vineyard. Amen.

The day before he suffered death, his brother Samuel called upon me early in the morning, to say that Josiah had a particular desire to see me. I set off in the afternoon, and reached the prison about half-past nine o'clock. I first had an interview with Mr. Winter, with whom I was at home in a few minutes; and being very desirous to see the prisoner that night, he gave me a note to Mr. Agar, the governor, who kindly conducted me to the cell.

My hearers, I will not attempt to describe what I felt when entering this dreary abode, in beholding a fine handsome young man, who was to be cut off by the hand of the executioner in a few hours, before he had reached the full bloom of youth! I first asked him if he knew me? He answered with considerable emotion, 'O yes! and remember both seeing and hearing you in Bury Street Chapel.' I then said, 'My poor dear fellow, I am truly distressed to find you in this awful situation.' He observed with a pleasant countenance, which was an indication of a thankful heart and great composure of mind, 'I am glad you are come, for I desired very much to see you. And I am not without hope that I shall be in heaven by this time to-morrow night!' I replied, 'The Lord grant that your expectation may be a good hope through grace: then I am certain you will possess a different mansion to this.' He then eagerly took up my letter, with the Bible, and said,—'Mr. Winter has read it to me two or three times, and highly approves it; and has kindly helped me

to look out the passages and explained them to me, and they have been a great consolation to my troubled mind.' After further conversation with him in the presence of the governor, I said, ' Whatever time he would wish to see me in the morning (God willing) I would be with him,' and if I could have been of any service to him, I would cheerfully have remained with him all night; but as he was not to suffer till twelve o'clock the following day, I advised him in faith and earnest prayer to commit himself into the hands of his compassionate and Almighty Redeemer, and if possible to fall asleep for an hour or two; he would then be refreshed, and the better able to watch and pray. The time fixed was half-past five, and to the honour of the turnkeys I speak it, they would with pleasure have admitted me at two or three had I requested it. I entered the prison exactly at the time appointed, and when the cell door was opened I perceived that he was just finishing his last letter to his poor wife, whom he was leaving a destitute widow with two small children, and near her confinement with a third, herself only twenty-three years of age! I asked him how he felt in his mind, and whether he had been to sleep? He replied, ' he thought he had slept half an hour; that he felt great anxiety in his mind with regard to the safety of his eternal state.' I said, ' if you rest solely upon the glorious person of the God-man Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in his blood and righteousness for the remission of your sins and the acceptance of your person in the sight of a just and holy God, there was no cause of fear; Christ came into this world on purpose to save such sinners as he was, and the more sinful, helpless, and wretched he saw and felt himself, he had the greater need of the Almighty Physician; that the divine Saviour was unspeakably more honoured and glorified in saving great sinners like him, than those who thought themselves better than other people, because they had not been permitted to break out into open and scandalous sins. And I could assure him, that Christ had saved some of the greatest sinners that ever lived upon earth, and that he never said an unkind word to any of them that humbly and earnestly applied to him for mercy; but on the contrary, according to his sovereign, free, rich, and abounding grace, he satisfied their most expanded desires, and gave more than they were able to ask or think. That these were left on record for our encouragement to trust in Christ, for he still possesses the same

tender heart and merciful nature ; and observed, If you look to him by faith as a helpless, ruined sinner, acknowledging to him that you deserve to die eternally for your sins against God and man, he will set your soul at a happy liberty, saying, " Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven." " Fear not, for I will be with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God !" Remember if you were not spiritually sick, you would not need the great Physician. If it were not for lost sinners he would have nothing to do, and his coming into the world would have been in vain. " They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." " He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Now, surely, he that left his Father's bosom to call by his grace sinners to repentance, will not relinquish a returning sinner like you. Persons may be too good for Christ *in their own estimation*, but they cannot be too bad. The skill of an eminent physician is displayed in some desperate case which is given up by others as incurable. Therefore, the more deadly sick we are, and receive the healing effects of the blood of Immanuel, for by his stripes we are healed, the more thankful we shall be, and celebrate in higher strains his endless praise !

I moreover showed him, that Christ neither expected nor required, that helpless sinners should love him before they applied to him for mercy : for he knows well that they would never come to him until they had tried all other expedients, and every other refuge had failed.— This was precisely the case with the woman in the gospel, who had expended all her living upon other physicians ; but instead of growing better, she was worse : and what brought her at last to Christ ? nothing less than pure and pressing necessity. *Did he upbraid her, and say, Yes, you can come to me when you can obtain no help from others ?* No, blessed be his name ; he healed her without money, and without price. I likewise proved to him, that *the converted thief who was crucified with Christ, was no other than a hardened villain when first nailed to the cross, as well as the other that was left ; and confirmed the truth of this remark by the united testimony of St. Matt. xxvii. 44, and St. Mark xv. 32.* I farther illustrated the free grace of God in the salvation of the vilest sinners, from the parable of, the prodigal son, and particularly impressed upon his mind, that *the prodigal never thought of returning to his father's house until he began*

to be in want, and actually perishing for bread ; then he returned to his offended father, and was graciously received, not merely without a murmuring word, but with every demonstration of joy, music, and dancing. Believe me, my dear fellow-sinner, that not only God and Christ, but the angels in heaven, are rejoicing to see you return to God, and in a few hours they will welcome your happy spirit into everlasting rest.

He would occasionally say to me, “those scriptures are a great consolation to my mind, but I sometimes think my sins are too numerous to be forgiven !” I exhorted him to pray against this temptation, as proceeding from Satan and his own unbelieving heart, and to which the most eminent saints are often exposed in this world of sin and conflict ; *that if he gave way to unbelieving fears, it would be the greatest sin he ever committed, which consisted in rejecting the remedy God had in rich grace provided for the lost and unworthy, in disbelieving God’s holy word, and believing Satan, the father of lies.* It was undervaluing the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for the vilest transgressors ; its cleansing power has brought millions of them that were ready to perish, to heaven. I am glad you feel yourself a sinner, but recollect the Son of God is a great Saviour. He is more able to save those who trust in him, than sin is able to destroy. That though I had not been permitted to offend capitally against the laws of my country, I was a far greater sinner than he was ; for I had possessed greater advantages, and had not improved them as I ought, and therefore have sinned against greater light and knowledge ; yet notwithstanding my aggravating and numberless transgressions, I trust my everlasting all into the hands of my most merciful Redeemer, and I believed that he would not disappoint my humble expectation. But if he is not able to save you, he is not able to save me. I rest upon his word of promise ; and if you are enabled to do the same, you will happily find him as good as his word, and infinitely better than your fears. “ *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.*”

To these plain gospel statements, with others of a similar nature, he listened with the most intense interest, which deeply affected my heart ; and I think I shall never forget this solemn and truly interesting scene, in prayer, conversation, and expounding different passages of scripture,

which he desired to understand, and that he thought suitable to his case. I spent near three hours ; and though in a dismal cold cell, *I number them among the most happy moments I ever enjoyed.* I firmly believe the Lord heard and answered our fervent and importunate prayers, according to his promise, which we often pleaded, namely, “ That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” It matters not whether it be in a prison or in a palace, for “ where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them,” St. Matt. xviii. 19, 20. The spiritual presence of Christ being with us, converted the solitary dungeon into the house of God, and the very gate of heaven !!! I was favoured with enlargement of heart at the throne of grace, and liberty of speech in pleading for mercy : and he enjoyed much comfort of mind and peace of conscience, so that we wept and rejoiced together ; and I hope, through the grace of God and the blood of Christ, I shall unite in heaven with him, the penitent thief upon the cross, and myriads of saved sinners, in gathering fruit unto life eternal, and in singing ceaseless praises to God and the Lamb.

He once observed to me, “ I feel now uncommonly low in my mind.” I replied, “ My friend, I do not wonder at that, the solemn hour of your departure is drawing nigh. Death is at all times a serious event, and always an awful and destructive enemy to flesh and blood. And when you reflect upon the manner in which you are to leave the world—not to feel, you would be destitute of all susceptibility of impression, which I should be sorry to witness ; or above the sensations of mortality, which is impossible, so long as you are in the body.” We kneeled down together, and prayed to the Lord Christ, that he would be graciously pleased, of his infinite mercy, not to forsake his helpless afflicted servant, and divinely support him preparatory and during the bitter pains of natural death, assuring his heart, by the Spirit the Comforter, that he was redeemed from the torments of the second death—eternal damnation : then he would sing, “ though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

After we rose from prayer he was much comforted, and greatly delivered from the cruel fears of the last enemy.

He wished me to see the letter he had written to his poor wife, who might then be considered a widow, and his children fatherless. He appeared to feel more for their forlorn condition than he did for himself, and wept bitterly, piteously exclaiming, ‘ it is my great sins and wicked course of life which have reduced them to this wretchedness. O that by my sufferings I could preserve them from it.’ These piercing lamentations were almost too much for me to bear; but I was the means of tranquillizing his mind, by reminding him, that as the Lord had enabled him to trust his immortal soul into his hand, it was his duty and privilege to commit his dear wife and helpless children unto his never-failing protection, who has promised to be “ a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless.” He attempted to read the letter, but was too much affected to proceed; and therefore gave it to me and desired me to finish it. There was one part of the letter which distressed him more than the rest, where he exhorted her never to leave her bed-room in the morning without praying to God, on her knees, to keep her and the children from all evil; and in the evening again, to pray with and for them, imploring God to keep them through the night under his merciful protection. When he had read these words, he burst into a flood of tears, and as soon as he could speak, exclaimed, “ O this we have never done,—we have never prayed together in all our lives, but have lived as though there was no God ! ! ” It is my sincere prayer, that these cutting reflections of a dying husband, may make an effectual impression upon the heart of the widow— upon my own mind, and upon the hearts of all that read these lines. For the word of God declares, “ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

He was also deeply affected with the situation of his afflicted mother, who is a widow ; but I am happy to add, that I have been informed, from good authority, that she is a sincere christian—“ A widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God.” He said, ‘ O that I had not slighted and rejected the faithful warning of my dear mother, but had taken her good advice. All these calamities would have been prevented.’ He was anxious, also, for an opportunity of warning his wicked companions to forsake their evil ways, and to flee from the wrath to come. He hoped the Lord would strengthen him, that he might be able to say a few words to them before he quitted this

world, as he expected to see them at the place of execution. Particularly, he desired to see one man, who first persuaded him to go out with him at night and steal sheep. He would have told me his name, had I wished it; but as I did not go to Maidstone as a police officer, but as a minister of the gospel, I had no desire of information. I understand he was on Penenden heath, to see the poor young man fall into the ditch he had prepared for him. It is my sincere desire, that the person to whom I have alluded, and his associates, who are yet permitted to go at large, will never forget the solemn and affecting scene, and bear in sorrowful remembrance the dying admonition of their former companion in crime, lest they repent when it is too late.

Mr. Winter joined us in the cell at seven o'clock, the time appointed. I then informed him that Paine had expressed a great desire to receive the sacrament; and if he would administer it, I should be happy to unite with them in commemorating the dying sufferings of our Lord; —to this he readily assented. Previous to receiving the sacrament, the prisoner said something respecting trusting in God, when Mr. Winter very properly cautioned him against confiding in the mercy of God in his absolute character. For he never would show the least mercy to any of the guilty race of Adam only in and by Christ, the God-man Mediator; and quoted many suitable passages of scripture to prove what he said, and observed, ‘I assure you that Mr. Heap and myself have no other hope of being saved.’ I with pleasure confirmed these solemn truths; and declared, that there was not a minister of the gospel upon earth that had the most distant hope of being saved on the ground of any goodness in himself. In a word, we were not saved as ministers, but as poor ill and hell-deserving sinners, who had fled to Christ as our, only refuge; that all mankind had sinned, and become condemned criminals in the sight of God; and that ‘if they did not put their whole trust and confidence in the glorious person and precious blood which cleanseth from all sin, they could not be saved. “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”’ He confessed his firm faith in these truths, and said that he had no other hope of being saved.

At half-past eight Mr. Agar, the governor, came in, and kindly asked me to take breakfast with him, and promised to send poor Paine some from his table. The invita-

tion I thankfully accepted, being much exhausted through the exercises of the morning. When we visited him after breakfast, he was removed from his cell into the condemned room, and two of his brothers were with him, to whom he was explaining the parable of the prodigal son, in a most earnest, affectionate, and surprising manner. He dwelt particularly upon the 20th verse, which sets forth the willingness of the father to receive the prodigal. Among other things, he said, ‘the rebellious son only walked, but his merciful father saw him a great way off, and ran to meet him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him;’ telling them that he was thus received to mercy, and exhorted them to return, and God would receive them likewise, &c. The countenances of his brothers were suffused with tears, but he begged them not to be distressed on his account, for he declared that he felt so happy in his mind, and had such consolation in his soul, that he could not weep; neither do I remember seeing a tear in his eyes afterwards; and I can say with truth, it was the same with me; for I was too much overjoyed to see him so wonderfully supported. He then requested us to sing the following hymn, which he selected himself,—
Hymn 550, 3rd part, Dr. Rippon’s.

“ Lord ! must I die ? Oh ! let me die
Trusting in thee alone !
My living testimony giv’n,
Then leave my dying one !
If I must die—oh ! let me die
In peace with all mankind ;
And change these fleeting joys below,
For pleasures all refin’d.
If I must die—as die I must,
Let some kind seraph come,
And bear me on his friendly wing
To my celestial home !
Of Canaan’s land, from Pisgah’s top,
May I but have a view !
Though Jordan should o’erflow its banks,
I’ll boldly venture through !”

He sung the whole of the hymn with a loud and distinct voice, and with much devotional fervour, and apparent comfort to himself.

We then ascended two flights of stairs, which led to the chapel; and I could not help remarking, that he walked with a much firmer step than I did, with his Bible under his left arm. I asked if he would let me take it for him? He replied, ‘I thank you, Sir, all the same; but

I would rather carry it myself.' Mr. Winter read the sacramental service, and in a very solemn and impressive manner. We believe the Lord was in our midst, and made it a feast to our souls.

The time was now hastily drawing on, when the executioner was to enter the room; but we did not permit him to come till within the last five minutes of our remaining there. The signal was privately given when the man of death was to enter; and I must say, the sight of him, and the careless unconcerned manner he approached poor Paine to tie his wrists, and pinion his arms, terrified me more than any thing I had witnessed. The poor criminal shuddered involuntarily, but soon recovered his firmness, and said, 'Do not tie my hands too fast—I will not run away:' and, if I mistake not, he added, in a pensive tone, 'I am not afraid to die.' He then requested the executioner not to take his clothes, for he wished one of his brothers to have them. The officer promised not to take any thing, and the truth of this promise I saw fulfilled, for his youngest brother had them.

A quarter past eleven o'clock the prison bell began to sound its doleful knell, which was the signal for leaving the condemned room. We then proceeded through different avenues till we reached the waggon which was to convey us to the heath. I rode with poor Paine, and Mr. Winter went in a post-chaise, agreeably to the plan we had previously arranged between ourselves; for he desired me not to leave him till he died, as I might, under the blessing of God, be a means of comfort to him, in staying his mind upon Christ, his Almighty Saviour, in the awful prospect before him. When I had taken my position on his left hand, and the executioner on his right, the melancholy procession issued from the portals of the prison, when a vast concourse of people were presented to our view. He gave a vacant stare upon the assembled multitudes, but I entreated him not to take the least notice of them, and endeavour to keep his mind fixed upon Christ, in humble confidence and prayer. To my advice he strictly attended, only occasionally speaking to his two brothers, who were walking close to the waggon, overwhelmed with grief. Having appeared deeply engaged in prayer (a few minutes) he said, 'Let us sing,

"God moves in a mysterious way," &c.

This we did. A few near the vehicle joined us in faint

voices. When we had finished, he exclaimed, ‘ Oh ! what consolation this hymn has been to my mind !’ One of the officers, who sat facing us with a blunderbuss in his arms, took him by the hand, and said, ‘ Oh ! Paine, that I was as happy in my mind as you are !’ He then said, with a cheerful countenance, ‘ let us sing,

“ Sovereign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise ;
All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command.”

Hymn 312, Heap's Selection.

He set it to the tune, *Hart's*, and we were singing the last verse as the waggon drew alongside the fatal platform where he was to suffer. Then we all knelt down, while the chaplain offered up a suitable and fervent prayer, that the Lord would strengthen him to meet the last enemy with holy resignation to his righteous will, and at last receive his soul into everlasting rest ; and that he would bless and sanctify this awful event, that it might be an effectual warning to all present, who were walking in the broad road to final destruction. During this affecting prayer, though there were supposed to be near four thousand people present, there was a solemn and death-like silence, which added still more to the awful solemnity. After we arose from prayer, he said, I must help him to sing another hymn. I begged to be excused, as my spirits were almost exhausted ; but he was so importunate, and as it was the last favour he should ask of me, I complied with his request. He would have his two brothers with him in the waggon to join us ; he then chose the following hymn, which I gave out two lines at a time, to *Bedford* tune.

“ If God is mine, then present things,
And things to come are mine ;
Yea, Christ, his word, and Spirit too,
And glory all divine.

If he is mine, then from his love
He every trouble sends ;
All things are working for my good,
And bliss his rod attends.

If he is mine, I need not fear
The rage of earth and hell ;
He will support my feeble frame,
Their utmost force repel.

If he is mine, let friends forsake—
Let wealth and honour flee ;
Sure He who giveth me himself,
Is more than these to me.

If he is mine, I'll boldly pass
 Through death's tremendous vale ;
 He is a solid comfort when
 All other comforts fail.

Oh, tell me, Lord ! that thou art mine ;
 What can I wish beside ?
 My soul shall at the fountain live,
 When all the streams are dried.

Hymn 287, 2nd part, Dr. Rippon's.

This scene was indescribably affecting. He sung with a clear distinct voice, and cheerful countenance. Though some of the crowd manifested a degree of levity, on our way to the place of execution, I could not at this time discern a dry eye amongst the vast multitude. There was one young man present, a most hardened profligate, who went, with many others, to be an idle and unmoved spectator, declared, that though he had seen many affecting sights, nothing he had ever seen before could make him shed a tear ; but he observed, ‘ This was too much for me to bear !’

I then conversed with him four or five minutes, and took my final leave of him saying, ‘ My dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ grant you his gracious, reviving, and life-giving presence ; then all things will be eternally well. Bear in mind the publican’s petition, and do not forget the thief upon the cross, who cried, “ Lord, remember me !” &c. Rest assured, that as you trust to the blood and righteousness of Christ for everlasting salvation, and are a true penitent for your sins, he is now saying to you, as he did to the thief upon the cross, “ Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.” The Lord send you a happy deliverance out of this wicked world ! Farewell !’

These were my last words with him. He expressed his unfeigned gratitude to the chaplain and myself for our instructions, and kind attention to him, and hoped we should soon meet in heaven.

The executioner then came forward to help him to step upon the plank which led to the scaffold, but he declined his assistance, and with a firm step walked up, and calmly placed himself under the fatal beam. I particularly requested the executioner not to hurry the poor fellow, but let him have time to speak to the people as long as he felt disposed. This he promised me, and kept his word. When the rope was adjusted, he addressed the vast concourse of people nearly as follows :

"Now, my dear friends, I hope you will take timely warning by me. You see what a dreadful thing sin is, and what it has brought me to. I beseech you, keep out of bad company. Obey your parents, guard against drinking and sabbath breaking : live sober and honest lives. Attend chapel : fear God, and put your trust in him ; and I hope when you come to die, you will be in a better state of preparation than I am at present."

He was not able to proceed any further, and desired the executioner to pull the cap over his face, and to tie a handkerchief over his eyes. In a few seconds the deadly bolt was drawn, and in three minutes the body ceased to move.

I then immediately left the waggon, and joined the Rev. Mr. Winter, who was waiting for me in a post-chaise.

Thus died JOSIAH PAINE by an ignominious death, as a warning to mankind, especially to youth. Consider the dreadful fruits of sin on the one hand, and the rich mercy and sovereign grace of God on the other. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

My respected hearers, I have, according to the ability the Lord hath given me, plainly described unto you the method of justification by the free grace of God, in the expiatory blood of Christ. Before you, I have exhibited both, in the salvation of two thieves ; one died with our Saviour on the cross, and the other I attended in his last moments : that which was the firm basis of their hopes, is my only foundation. I expect to be saved only on the same condition, namely, "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." For unless the salvation of sinners be of pure unmixed grace, through the righteousness of Christ, "without the deeds of the law," no flesh can be saved. Whatever distinctions there may be in society between one man and another, in the grand article of justification there is no difference in the sight of God : "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," consequently deserve eternal death. See Romans iii.

An able writer observes, that in the great business of justification, one does not stand more entitled to this immensely free favour than another—"the virtuous lady and the infamous prostitute—the pleasing accomplished

gentleman, and the vile scoundrel, are upon a level here." This system is mortifying to human pride, and to self-righteous persons ; but it constitutes the grand peculiarity and the pre-eminent glory of the gospel of the blessed God. This humiliating truth accords with the experience of all the people of God in every age and nation, however estimable they may have been as men, and as christians. Holy Job says, " If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me : if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." And again, " I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Seraphic Isaiah exclaims, " Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips." David, the man after God's own heart, and the sweet singer of Israel, humbly prayed, " Enter not into judgment with thy servant : for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." St. Paul, the great apostle of the gentiles, who was caught up into paradise, says, " O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" Archbishop Usher hoped to die praying with the publican ; and these were his last words, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" The immortal Selden, whom the learned Grotius (although he was his antagonist) styled *the glory of the English nation*, (and the above-mentioned prelate declared that he was not worthy to carry his books after him;) this eminent philosopher confessed, that nothing he had seen or read afforded him the least comfort in the prospect of death, but St. Paul's noble declaration, " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief." And the laborious Grimshaw, who might justly be styled the apostle of Yorkshire, said, these should be his last words, and they were ; "*Here goes Grimshaw, an unprofitable servant.*"

Certainly, my hearers, these worthies did not expect salvation because of any inherent goodness in them. Their faith was by the operation of the Spirit of God ; and it entirely rested on the testimony God gave of his Son ; therefore good works are not the cause of salvation in any sense of the word ; they are the effects and fruits of precious faith, and genuine evidences of our love to God, Christ, the Comforter, his people, ways, and ordinances.

My dear young friends, it is now my intention to address you particularly, and I trust you will believe me,

when I say, it is out of the purest love to your never-dying souls. O ! that the Lord would deign to make me an humble an honoured instrument of promoting your temporal and eternal welfare. Then I should be truly happy, and you indeed would be blessed. In a few more days, months, or years of sin and tribulation, we shall meet in our Almighty Saviour's kingdom of glory and rest, and rejoice together in one harmonious song of praise to our covenant God.

It is my design to be very pointed in my appeals to your conscience ; even to such a degree, that some people who love to be told smooth things and want the wound to be healed slightly, will doubtless call me severe. However, I wish you to understand, if I trouble you, it is that you may rejoice in the end : and if I use the rod, it is for your correction, and not for your destruction. Like a faithful surgeon, that probes the wound to the quick, and makes his patients cry out under pain, he is soon reconciled to this treatment, when he knows it is for his health.

There are, my young friends, four crying evils, and against them I sincerely caution you ; on account of which, "the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

First. *Disobedience to parents.*—This sin takes the lead of every other, containing in itself a world of iniquity. Its horrid turpitude consists in breaking down those bounds which reason and affection have prescribed. It opposes them from whom we derived our being, and who are appointed of God our natural guardians and protectors, who often deny themselves the comforts, and even the necessaries of life, to support and promote the welfare of their offspring ! add to these privations and troubles, the many sleepless and restless nights, and (if your parents fear God) in prayer and supplication for your happiness in this world, and eternal salvation in the world to come ! Do we not read in the writings of Moses, that the obstinate son was to be stoned to death ? And again, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." How much more, when this venerable character is your father ! " Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." And does not Solomon, with impressive eloquence, address his son, saying, " My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Hearken unto

thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." For my own part, I have reason to thank God that my dear mother kept me with a tight and rigid hand; for I lost my honoured father when I was only fourteen. If this had not been the case, perhaps I might have come to some untimely end. I remember once saying to her, (for which I am sincerely grieved) *I would have this and the other thing, like other boys;* but she sternly replied, she would not allow it as long as I was under her roof, regardless of consequences.—She would never suffer me to do evil, that good might come. I thought her very hard and cruel at the time, but I have had reason to bless God for it since.

I remember a very disobedient son who ran away from his parents, and enlisted as a soldier. He soon began to show his insolence, but the officer severely reprobated him, saying, "Sir, remember you are not with your poor father and mother now, whose hearts you have broke; you are under the imperative command of your masters; and if you refuse prompt obedience, you shall be exemplarily punished." "O," said he, "all this I could have borne, had not the officer alluded to my dear parents whom my wicked disobedient conduct had distressed and ruined!" If you reject the advice of your parents, you will be exposed to the artifice of every villain, and to the deceptions of all kinds of hypocrites.

I think I ought to admonish you to take heed how you form matrimonial connexions. In this state there is no medium; persons are either very happy or very miserable. I know that I am treading on delicate ground; and the fewer words we can express ourselves in upon this topic, as well as some others, the better. I desire to be understood as speaking generally; and I will state my opinion in two distinct propositions:—1. Parents ought not to force their children to marry against their natural inclination or will. 2. Children ought not to marry against the just and reasonable objections of their parents. When unions are formed in direct violation of these principles, whatever may be the secular advantages of either party, discord and animosity will unquestionably be the consequence. It is likewise an imperative duty enjoined upon all those who fear God, not to yoke themselves with unbelievers. See 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

Secondly. *Sabbath-breaking.*—This heinous offence against the positive laws of God, that is so alarmingly

upon the increase in the present day, is the high road to every abomination. How many of our fellow-creatures, instead of attending a place of worship, and making the Lord's day a rest for both soul and body, awfully profane it in idle visits, indulging in sinful pleasures, and forming new connexions ! Catholicism, and the dissipated manners of the French people, particularly in the higher walks of life, or what are called polite circles, are polluting the waters at the fountain, causing the streams of the sanctuary to minister to their evil propensities. To speak out plainly, innumerable multitudes of nominal christians, if we are to judge of their conduct, which, I still maintain, is the best method of ascertaining men's real character, attend the house of God in the morning, that their consciences may be easy in violating the sabbath the remaining part of the day. They think it hard, beyond endurance, if they serve God *in their way* in the former part of the day, if they cannot obtain a licence to serve the devil and their lusts in the afternoon and evening. If this is not practical antinomianism, where shall we find it ? If professed protestants proceed with the same speed in approaching infidelity as they have lately done, in these days of liberality, which is only another name for irreligion, they will be, ere long, perfectly modelled in their religious principles after the fashion of the inhabitants of France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. And I should not be surprised (for I have lived long enough not to wonder at any thing,) if, in a few years, the infamous book of sports be again read in England by legal authority, and public places of amusement opened after divine service, for the practice of licentious diversions, patronized by the bewitching and contaminating influence of the great ; so that those persons who worship the god of this world, feeling the sabbath an intolerable burden, may be *comfortably relieved* ; and also others who have just as much natural religion as will conduct them peaceably, but safely, into the pit of endless perdition. The following portion of scripture gives an accurate descriptions of their characters and employment, though not portrayed, as some would think, in very elegant language :—" Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope," &c. See Isa. v. 18—26.

Thirdly. Guard against the *sin of lying* and *profane swearing*.—With regard to the vulgar habit of swearing

and taking God's holy name in vain, no one who has the fear of God before his eyes, can hear it without inexpressible pain. The Rev. John Howe possessed a remarkable talent for putting to silence profane swearers. A nobleman in his presence once fell into a dreadful passion, occasioned by something that displeased him, and called upon God, in a very awful manner, to damn his soul! This excellent minister, taking off his hat with great solemnity, said, "My lord, I pray that God would save your soul." This produced such an impression upon his mind, that he was never heard to swear afterwards.

The sin of *lying* is also a heinous offence. The father of lies, through his subtlety, ruined our first parents in paradise. You may have a degree of security against thieves, by locks and other fastenings, but nothing can restrain a lying tongue. St. James emphatically styles it, "a world of iniquity;" an unruly evil that no man can tame. If you are ever detected in this dreadful vice, you will lose the confidence of your employers and companions; and think not to escape exposure, for it will be sure to betray you at last, for you will tell one falsehood to cover another, till at last it ends in your complete destruction. "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and finally, the word of God declares, that all "liars shall have their portion in the lake of brimstone and fire," Rev. xxi. 8.

Fourthly. *Bad company*.—Dr. Monsey used to call "human nature a rogue and villain." If it were not so, where is the necessity of bolts and bars, and such severe laws to keep it within bounds? "For the law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." I would caution you against different kinds of bad company; and that you may not be deceived, you may know them by these marks. Those who advise you, either directly or indirectly, to disobey your parents—forsake the house of God—break the sabbath—live above your circumstances—are your enemies, however pleasing in appearance, and smooth or polite in language. Take the advice of a faithful friend; you may rest assured they only seek your ruin. How many have rode in carriages, by devouring widows' houses, and cheating their creditors! and rather than they would forsake a life of idleness and splendid misery, have committed forgery, and died ignominiously. Had a faithful friend met such a one a few weeks before, who was acquainted with his manner

of life, and told him, Unless you forsake your evil ways, you will be certainly hung at Newgate, like a common felon, he would either have derided him as a fool or a madman, or had believed him. Surely his knees would have smote together, as Belshazzar's did, at the handwriting on the wall. Far better would it have been for such characters had they carried a porter's knot, yea, and his heavy burden too, than by their depraved and wicked habits, ruin their wives and children, and bring swift destruction upon themselves. I therefore earnestly beseech you to look upon the person who would counsel you to live in a style you know in your conscience you cannot support by honest means, with the same indignation you would upon an assassin, who insidiously approaches to give you a mortal wound.

Beware of infidels of every description, whether open or concealed deists; they are to be known by their speaking reproachfully or scoffingly of the word of God, and extolling human reason above the holy scriptures, "which alone are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." To reason with a person upon the solemn subject of religion, who denies the authenticity of the Bible, will be found as ineffectual as holding a candle to the eyes of the blind. If persons will not believe from the testimony of the holy oracles the doctrine of a future state of misery and happiness, was Gabriel himself sent from the throne of God, and to stand in the open air, having a drawn sword in his right hand, and to swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, "That the righteous shall enter into life eternal, but the wicked shall be turned into hell;" infidels would not believe him. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Luke xvi. 31.

I have hitherto, my young friends, been speaking to you in the character of a moralist; I shall now address you as a minister of the gospel. And though I know there are only two sorts of characters present, the righteous and the wicked, that I may speak pointedly to your case, I will consider you under three distinct classes.

1. The openly wicked and profane. And I doubt not there are many of this class have heard and will read this sermon, who are greedily following the desires and devices of their own depraved hearts, putting far from them the evil day. "God is not in all their thoughts;"

except to despise and blaspheme his holy name. To you the ironical words of the inspired preacher are sweet, and contain the doctrine you delight to practise—" Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." But, oh, my young friends, be not deceived, hear the conclusion of the whole matter, for in the end they sting with the adder, and bite like a serpent: " **BUT KNOW THOU, THAT FOR ALL THESE THINGS GOD WILL BRING THEE INTO JUDGMENT.**" You are drinking the poisonous draughts of iniquity, and are intoxicated with the delusive pleasures of sin, and vainly think you can repent at any time, and that a few moments at the end of life are quite sufficient to prepare you to meet the Judge of all the earth. Oh, thoughtless mortals! how can you tell but God may say to you this very day or night, as he did to the impious wretch who adopted a similar mode of reasoning, " **Thou fool, this day thy soul shall be required of thee!**"

Some ungodly persons who read this sermon, may very probably endeavour to abuse the rich and free grace of God I have in some humble degree set forth, and continue in sin that grace may abound, saying, 'as you have proved that the converted thief was a hardened criminal when first he fell to the cross, and yet he obtained mercy, why may not we if we cry to the Lord for mercy as he did?' I reply, To depend upon such a woeful uncertainty, evinces a state of mind awfully infatuated, and hearts hardened in sin beyond conception. I neither can nor will attempt to describe the deplorable condition of such characters who can take encouragement to continue in sin because God is good!! An observation which that excellent servant of the Lord, Mr. Whitefield, often made, is worthy to be written in letters of gold— "*Christ saved one of the thieves on the cross that none might despair;* and but one, that none might presume." If there are any of my readers crying out under a conviction of their lost state as ruined sinners, " What shall I do to be saved?" I answer, however numerous and aggravating your sins are, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. For the Son of man came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and hath faithfully promised, Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.

2. Are you self-righteous persons, and think to go

to heaven, partly through Christ, and partly through your own good works and pious deeds? Your condition is truly lamentable, for if our Lord Christ speaks the truth, and it is impossible for him to lie, you are at a farther distance from the kingdom of God than the most abandoned characters. "Verily I say unto you, that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." The pharisee that went into the temple to pray, thought that he had many good works to plead before God, which would undoubtedly entitle him to special favour, in which he trusted as his passport to heaven, and after all went down to his house condemned; and I fear at last with the whole of his imaginary virtues descended into hell: but the poor broken-hearted publican, who could not boast of good works, had nothing but sin to confess, and nothing to plead but covenant mercy, yet "he went down to his house justified freely from all things from which he could not have been justified by the law of Moses;" and I am persuaded when he died, his immortal soul ascended to reign with Christ in glory.

3. I cannot conclude, my young christian friends, without addressing a few words to you; and I only regret that my limits will not permit me to say all I intended. I will endeavour to give you much in a narrow compass. I begin by saluting you as a class of persons pre-eminently distinguished, by preventing and saving grace—hail, ye highly favoured of the Lord! happy are you that are in such a case! You have mercifully escaped the crimes and sorrows which have drowned many of your own age in the fearful vortex of destruction. Well might Solomon say, "The way of transgressors is hard." "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

As you profess to be the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, from you more will be expected than from your brothers and sisters, or fellow-servants, who make no profession of religion but that which appears natural and common to every man. In all your ways, circumstances, and relative situations, remember both by night and day the eye of God is upon you! To your parents, guardians, employers, and masters, never render eye-service, which is nothing more than to be very diligent and busy when they are looking upon you; yet upon all your actions I hope this memorable motto will be indelibly written, "THOU GOD SEEST ME!"

Should this be your happy state, your souls will be possessed with the all-seeing and penetrating presence of Jehovah, your minds with his word, and your hearts fortified with his fear; and when tempted to commit that which is evil, you will stand in awe and sin not, exclaiming, "How ⁱⁿ I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!"

Do not neglect to read the holy scriptures morning and evening. Be much in prayer and praise. Pray that the Lord would grant to you a double portion of his Spirit, in all his illuminating grace and consolation; that he may dwell in your hearts as the Spirit of faith, love, power, adoption, and comfort, bearing witness with your spirits, that you are the children of God. That he would also enable you to examine yourselves in reference to your state and wants, giving you grace to watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation, especially against the sins which do easily beset you. Embrace every opportunity of hearing the gospel, and attending the ordinances of the house of God, particularly on a Lord's day; and **BE SURE TO BE IN TIME FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SERVICE.** And if it be in your power, sit under the ministry of those faithful servants of Christ, who are sound experimental teachers, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, in doctrine, experience, and practice; whose lives and conversation, as well as their ministerial labours, "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Finally, never forget there are three exercises, which I hope you will make the study of your lives, and when united in the christian character, make him a blessing to mankind, and an ornament to the church—namely, *diligence, fervour, and communion with God*—"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." "If these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." And when you fall asleep in Jesus, a triumphant "entrance shall be administered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour." Amen!

A P P E N D I X.

"ON Thursday last, JOSIAH PAINE, convicted at the last Kent Assizes of stealing six sheep, the property of E. Ralph, at Appledore, was executed at Penenden Heath.

"After his conviction, the prisoner conducted himself with great propriety, and evinced much satisfaction at the benevolent and pious attention of the Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Winter. On Wednesday he had an interview with his mother, three of his brothers, and a sister, and afterwards with his wife and two children. These painful scenes considerably agitated him, and we need not add that his unhappy relatives were also deeply affected. On the morning of Thursday, the Rev. Mr. Heap, a dissenting minister from London, visited the malefactor, at the earnest and particular request of the latter. Shortly after eleven o'clock, PAINE, accompanied by Mr. Heap, received the sacrament from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Winter, and was then conducted to a cell, where the executioner proceeded to perform the necessary awful preparations of pinioning his arms, and tying his wrists. When he first saw the executioner, the criminal seemed to shrink from him, but soon recovered his firmness, and walked to the waggon without any apparent trepidation. Mr. Heap ascended the vehicle with him; and, the procession being arranged, orders were given for its departure.

"Shortly after eleven o'clock, the melancholy procession issued from the portals of the prison. Two young men, brothers of the prisoner, immediately got up to the side of the waggon, and walked all the way to the Heath, conversing with their unhappy relative. They were greatly affected; but the prisoner did not appear particularly moved. On arriving at the fatal spot on Penenden Heath, the waggon drew up in the usual manner in front of the scaffold. The prisoner and his brothers joined the minister in prayer, and sang a hymn, after which the Rev. Mr. Winter ascended and prayed with the prisoner, who continued very collected. Mr. Winter having taken his last farewell of the prisoner, the latter begged of his brothers to enter the waggon, and sing another hymn with him. In this they were joined by the dissenting minister. The hymn consisted of several verses, and commenced with, 'If God is mine.' The minister then took his final leave of the prisoner, and bade him be of good cheer; 'Remember,' said he, 'the publican, and the thief on the cross. To the thief Christ said, as he now says to you, "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." ' The prisoner then kissed his brothers, who were overwhelmed with distress; but he begged of them to bear up, and said, 'I shall meet you again in heaven.' The scene was deeply affecting, and we were much surprised that it had not more apparent effect on the prisoner; but during the whole of the proceeding he did not evince acute feeling. There was nothing of levity

in his manner; but it seemed in some degree to border upon indifference. He was not ironed, as has hitherto been customary in such cases, so that he ascended the scaffold without assistance. On the executioner preparing to perform his dreadful office, PAINE said to him, 'let me have a middling length of rope, and catch me as soon as I fall.' The rope, having been adjusted, he addressed the spectators as follows.—

"Now, my friends, I hope you will take warning by me; you see what sin brought me to. Keep out of bad company, live soberly and honestly, attend the chapels, fear God, and put your trust in him, and when you come to die, I hope you will be better prepared than I am at this time."—Extracted from the *Maidstone Gazette and Kentish Courier*, Tuesday, April 7, 1829.

EXECUTION OF JOSIAH PAINE, FOR SHEEP-STEALING.

"This unfortunate man underwent the awful sentence of the law on Thursday last, at Penenden Heath. From the time of his condemnation to the hour of execution his attention to the welfare of his soul was undivided, with the exception of writing several letters to his friends, which letters were elucidatory of his mis-spent life, the depravity of his heart, and the sinfulness of his conduct, in the sight of an offended God. The Rev. J. Winter, the chaplain at the prison, was unremitting in his endeavours to impress on the mind of the unfortunate man the necessity of a preparation for the great change he was about to undergo from time to eternity. He was very attentive to the Rev. Gentleman's instructions, and likewise to a letter of religious advice which he received from the Rev. Mr. Heap, a dissenting minister in London. The day previous to his execution, he was visited by his wife and two children, his mother, and three of his brothers. The scene which took place may be better conceived than described. The Rev. Mr. Heap visited him the same evening about ten o'clock, accompanied by Mr. Agar, the governor of the prison, and again on the morning of the execution *as early as half-past five o'clock*. At ten o'clock the Rev. Gentleman and the prisoner partook of the sacrament administered by the chaplain.

"The Rev. Mr. Heap accompanied the criminal in the waggon to the place of execution. On leaving the gaol, the unfortunate man's countenance underwent no change; he attentively listened to the observations of Mr. Heap, occasionally leaning over the waggon to speak to his brothers, who were walking by the side of it; when nearly arrived at the Heath, he commenced singing a hymn, and continued to sing until he reached the scaffold."

The remaining account is precisely the same as the foregoing.—See *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday, April 7, 1829.

Friendly reader! Do not despise seasonable and salutary advice; be assured that disobedience to parents, bad company, idle habits, gambling, theft, lying, swearing, and drunkenness, lead mankind directly to the high road of present and everlasting destruction, namely, to imprisonment, dismal captivity, self-murder, the gallows, and death eternal!

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Heiligen, 1.

3

Die Wahrheit.

Von

Karl

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Die Wahrheit.

(Ein Vortrag. 1863.)

Einen früheren Vortrag über „salomonische Weisheit“ schloß ich mit den Worten: „Alles ist eitel, ausgenommen die Wahrheit und ihr Exponent, der Radikalismus“.

Nach diesem Ausspruch wirst sich ganz von selbst die Frage auf, was denn Wahrheit sei und in welchem Verhältniß der Radikalismus zu ihr stehe. Wer diese Frage vollständig beantworten wollte, würde sich eine Aufgabe stellen, zu deren Lösung weder die Kraft noch die Lebenszeit eines Menschen ausreicht. Denn in das Gebiet der Wahrheit gehört nicht bloß Alles was existirt, sondern sogar Alles was nicht existirt. Die Wahrheit umfaßt die ganze Welt mit Allem was sie herbringt und denkt, sagt und verschweigt. Der Radikalismus aber hat es so wenig, wie irgend eine andere Richtung, in seiner Macht, über alle Räthsel Aufschluß zu geben, deren Lösung das nie ruhende Bedürfniß des Menschen nach Wahrheit verlangt. Was den Radikalismus berechtigt, als Exponent der Wahrheit aufzutreten, ist bloß Dies:

(3)

1. Er sucht die Wahrheit allseitig um der Wahrheit willen und verlangt ihre Herrschaft;
2. Er scheut vor keinen Konsequenzen der Wahrheit zurück und bringt ihr zu lieb alle andern Rücksichten zum Schweigen.

Es ist dies im Grunde nicht mehr, als von jedem vernunftbegabten Wesen verlangt werden sollte, aber es wird zum entscheidenden Vorzug durch die Stellung, welche die Menschen im Allgemeinen zur Wahrheit eingenommen haben. Dass man, um die Wahrheit zu finden, von allen übernommenen Vorstellungen abstrahiren müsse, haben die Philosophen, diese Wahrheitsfreunde par excellence, uns längst eingeschärft; aber dass man das Gefundene um seiner selbst willen schätzen, dass man es ohne Scheu aussprechen und ohne Rücksicht auf die Vertreter übernommener Vorstellungen verbreiten müsse, diese Forderung hat am Wenigsten in dem Eugendprogramme der Philosophen geglänzt. Dass Philosophie Liebe zur Weisheit oder Wahrheit bedeute, haben wir schon als Schulnaben gelernt; dass aber diese Liebe auch die Freue einfühlichen müsse, hat man uns am Wenigsten durch das eigene Beispiel gezeigt. Descartes, den man neben Bacon den Vater der neueren Philosophie genannt hat, stellte allen Untersuchungen die Forderung voran, von den ersten Gründen anzufangen, alle Voraussetzungen und Annahmen aufzugeben, die uns von Jugend auf durch Erziehung und Umgebung eingepflanzt worden, kurz Alles, sogar die Existenz der sinnlichen Dinge und die unumstößlichen Sätze der Mathematik in erster Instanz zu leugnen oder in Zweifel zu ziehen. Aber als ein Hauptgrund zu dieser sehr empfehlenswerten Zweifelsucht

gilt ihm die Möglichkeit, „Gott“ könnte und absichtlich zum Irrthum geschaffen haben! Vor der Autorität „Gottes“ also, des Unvermeidlichen und Uuangreifbaren, dessen Existenz vor Allem erst zu beweisen war, brachte Descartes seine vorsichtigen Zweifel sofort zum Schweigen, obschon er denselben die edle That zutraute, uns Menschen als Märtner in die Welt gesetzt zu haben. So wie gewisse arithmetische Kunstsstücke, von welcher Seite man sie auch ansasse, immer die nämliche Zahl zum Vorschein bringen, so besteht, wie es scheint, das Hauptkunststück der Philosophen darin, durch die Folgerungen ihrer Systeme immer einen Gott herauszurechnen. Wo sie nicht mit ihm beginnen, müssen sie jedenfalls mit ihm endigen. Gleich Descartes, foderte auch Bacon als Vorbedingung aller richtigen Erkenntniß „eine Reinigung des Sinnes von allen abstrakten Theorien und überlieferten Vorurtheilen“; zugleich führte er sehr richtig alle wahre Erkenntniß auf die Erfahrung und die Naturphilosophie zurück. Der nämliche Bacon aber, Philosoph und Staatskanzler, wußte sich mit der Theologie, dem direkten Gegensatz seiner realistischen Erkenntnistheorie, ganz friedlich abzufinden. Und was haben wir an unsern großen deutschen Philosophen erlebt? Die meisten waren — Kronen aller Ironie! — königliche Professoren und wer von einem Königlich preußischen Professor ein offenes und ehrliches Zeugnis für die Wahrheit erwartet, liefert dadurch bloß eins gegen seinen eigenen Verstand. Selbst Kant wußte seine kritische Philosophie geschmeidig auf den Berliner Leisten zu schlagen und Hegel, obschon ein Schwabe, eignete sich geschickt die „preußischen Pfiffe“ an, die er in die „List der Idee“ übersetzte. Um aber das Verbrechen wieder auszugleichen,

dass er die Philosophie missbrauchte, um das infame Preußen-thum an die Spitze des Universums zu schlussfolgern, schmug-gelte er, mehr polizeilistig als ideenlistig, seine Freiheits-Ideen in einer philosophischen Gaunersprache ein, die nach seinem eigenen Zeugniß Niemand verstand. Ueberhaupt hat an der dunklen Tiefe manches berühmten Schriftstellers die Polizei und der Pöbel mehr Anteil, als sein Genie. Alle Welt würde bedenklich den Kopf schütteln, wenn man ihr versicherte, die wahre Philosophie sei die Stütze der Throne und der Altäre, und doch geht alle Welt schweigend über die verdäch-tige Thatsache hinweg, dass überall die berühmtesten Philoso-phen die Freunde der Könige waren und mit den Pfaffen in Frieden lebten. Besonders bemerkenswerth und bedeutungs-voll ist ferner, dass fast alle unsre bekanntesten Philosophen aus der Sippschaft der Theologen hervorgegangen sind :

Rant hat Theologie studirt,
Fichte hat Theologie studirt,
Schelling hat Theologie studirt,
Hegel hat Theologie studirt,
sogar Arnold Ruge hat einst Theologie studirt,
ja selbst Ludwig Feuerbach hat Theologie studirt,
aus welcher er später in die Anti-Theologie übersprang, ohne
aber die Konsequenzen dieser Stellung bis zum entschiedenen
Materialismus systematisch zu verfolgen.

Wenn nun eine Reinigung des Gehirns von den überlie-ferten Anschauungen, Vorstellungen, Irrthümern, Vorur-theilen die erste Bedingung zur Ermöglichung einer Erfor-schung der Wahrheit ist, so lässt sich schließen, wie schwer es unsfern theologischen Philosophen oder philosophischen Theo-logen gewesen sein muss, einen unbefangenen Standpunkt

zu gewinnen und der Wahrheit direkt in's Gesicht zu schauen. Das Wort „Ein Pfaffe bleibt ein Pfaffe“ läßt sich auch modifiziert anwenden: ein Theologe bleibt ein Theologe. Auf dem Wege von der Kanzel zum Katheder, den nahe Philosophen eingeschlagen, haben wir wahrscheinlich den Schlüssel zur Erklärung der Thattheile zu suchen, daß sie sämtlich Spirituallen geblieben sind, während die geistige Vergangenheit unserer deutschen Materialisten auf das Stadium der Naturwissenschaften zurückführt. Unsre Philosophen haben den Gott ihrer theologischen Welt einfach seines religiösen Aufzuges entkleidet, um ihn als „Idee“ in die Philosophie einzuführen. Ihre Philosophie war übertragene Theologie, theils aus Unbeholfenheit, theils aus Bedanterie, theils aus Unterkhanenfurcht getauscht mit Phrasen, welchen der gesunde Menschenverstand eben so wenig beikommen konnte wie die Polizei. Sie erreingen damit die erhabene Satisfaktion, nicht bloß nicht verfolgt, sondern auch nicht verstanden zu werden, eine Satisfaktion, welche unumstößlich beweist, daß ihnen die Wahrheit und ihre Verbreitung über Alles ging. ●

Die angeführten berühmten Beispiele zeigen um so mehr die Notwendigkeit, bei Erforschung und Vertretung der Wahrheit nicht bloß eine Reinigung des Kopfes von allen aus der Vergangenheit und Erziehung übernommenen Vorurtheilen, sondern auch eine Reinigung des „Herzens“ von allen durch feindliche Umgebung und gemeines Interesse gebotenen Rücksichten als unerlässliche Voraussetzung an die Spitze zu stellen. Erkenntniß der Wahrheit ohne ihre offene und entschiedene Verkündigung ist Verrath an derselben. Beide Requisite, aber hat nur der Radikalismus aufzuweisen.

en. Wenn daher dessen Vertreter auch auf keine höhere Begabung zur Erkenntniß des Wahren Anspruch machen können, als andre Menschen, so dürfen sie doch mit Recht Anspruch machen auf mehr Ehrlichkeit, Aufrichtigkeit, Mutth bei der Darlegung ihrer Ueberzeugungen und das genügt zur Sicherung des Standpunktes, den ich ihnen vindizire.

Auf diesem Standpunkt nun soll ich mich über das Wesen, die Erfodernisse, die Grenzen, die Gegenstände des Inbegriffs aller Erkenntniß d. h. über den Inhalt des Wortes *Wahrheit* verbreiten, des gewichtigsten Wortes, das die Sprache kennt, eines Wortes, das in Aller Mundu und doch so selten zum Vantwerden berechtigt ist, eines Wortes, welches das erste Bedürfniß aller denkenden Wesen anspricht und doch keinem einzigen volle Befriedigung bringt, eines Wortes, nach dessen Inhalt Alles schmachtet und vor dem doch Alles zurückblebt, eines Wortes, das alle Rätsel wie alle Lösungen, alle Probleme wie alle Erfolge, alle Liebe wie allen Hass, alles Gute wie alles Böse, alles Leben wie alle Vernichtung gleichzeitig repräsentirt und umfaßt. Wenn ich bei dieser Aufgabe an etwas Anderes dachte, als an die Aufstellung allgemeiner Gesichtspunkte und die Andeutung der Umfangslinien meines Thema, so würde ich die Thorheit begehen, nicht bloß die Grenzen eines Vortrags, sondern auch die Grenzen meiner Befähigung maßlos zu überschreiten. Innerhalb der Begrenzung, in der ich meine Aufgabe zu halten habe, glaube ich einen Ueberblick über das Gebiet der Wahrheit am Besten eröffnen oder erleichtern zu können durch Aufstellung der Haupt-Gegensätze oder Schranken, mit denen sie in Verührung kommt. Demnach will ich eine kurze Betrachtung anstellen über folgende Gegensätze:

Wahrheit und Endlichkeit,
Wahrheit und Schein,
Wahrheit und Irrthum,
Wahrheit und Unwahrheit,
Wahrheit und Lüge,

Diese Gegensätze ziehen sich durch alle Gebiete hindurch, in welchen die Wahrheit zu suchen und zur Anwendung zu bringen ist, also vorzugsweise durch daß der Wissenschaft, der Kunst und der Sittlichkeit. Die Wahrheit ist entweder Gegenstand der Erkenntniß und dann ist ihr Gebiet vorzugsweise die Wissenschaft; oder Gegenstand des schöpferischen Bildens und dann wird sie zum Erforderniß der Kunst; oder Gegenstand der Rücksichten im Verhältniß der Menschen unter einander und dann bildet sie den Inhalt der Sittlichkeit. Diese drei Gebiete zusammenfassend ein System des Radicalismus aufzustellen, wäre eine neue philosophische Aufgabe, deren Vorarbeiten aber noch nicht vollendet sind.

Die menschliche Wissbegierde, die man mit einem andren Wort Wahrheitsliebe nennen kann, ist unermüdlich wie unersättlich, sie steht an keiner Grenze still und strebt Alles und Jedes zu erforschen. Dieses Streben kann schon aus dem Grunde niemals auf vollständige Befriedigung hoffen, weil das Leben des Einzelnen für den langen Weg zu den Zielen seiner Wissbegierde nicht ausreicht, abgesehen davon, daß das Wissen überhaupt seine Grenzen hat. Deshalb mache ich aus Wahrheit und Endlichkeit einen Gegensatz. Andere bilden daraus einen W i d e r s p u c h, um mit dessen Lösung ein spirituellistisches Kunftstück auszuführen, oder ein frommes Geschäft zu machen. „Wenn — so ungefähr lautet ihr Raisonnement — der Wissensdrang des menschlichen Geistes in's

Unendliche geht, so muß der Geist selbst unendlich sein. Die freie Bahn jener Unendlichkeit aber kann er erst betreten, nachdem er seine endliche Hülle abgestreift hat. Dann findet sein Drang in einem höheren Leben die Befriedigung, die er hier nur ahnen lernt durch sein höheres Bedürfniß.“ Diese Schlussfolgerung ist gleich bequem für Diejenigen, von denen sie ausgeht, wie für Diejenigen, auf welche sie berechnet ist. Sie zu würdigen, brauchen wir sie bloß auf die Leiblichen Bedürfnisse zu übertragen. Wir werden dann sofort finden, daß das Bedürfniß unseres Magens eben so unendlich ist wie das unseres Geistes und wir brauchen uns nur am Ursitz aller deutschen Philosophie, in München, umzusehen um uns zu überzeugen, daß der deutsche Bierdurft eben so wenig definitiv zu löschen ist wie der deutsche Wissensdurft. Daraus würde denn die Konsequenz folgen, daß die Münchener eines zweiten Lebens bedürfen, um ihr unterbrochenes Biertrinken fortzusetzen. Gehen wir näher auf die Frage ein, so wird sich herausstellen, daß die Unerlässlichkeit oder Unbegrenztheit zum Wesen des natürlichen Bedürfnisses überhaupt, des leiblichen wie des geistigen, gehört, daß das Bedürfniß nichts Anderes ist, als das jedem lebenden Wesen inwohnende Gefühl der Nothwendigkeit, seinen in fortwährender Veränderung begriffenen Organismus fortwährend zu ergänzen, zu erhalten, in seinen einzelnen Theilen zu ersetzen und zu seinen einzelnen Verrichtungen zu befähigen. Daraus folgt einfach, daß das Bedürfniß nicht aufhören kann, so lang die Möglichkeit und Nothwendigkeit solcher Ergänzung, Erhaltung, Ersetzung und Befähigung vorhanden ist. Bedürfniß und Leben sind unzertrennlich, das Bedürfniß ist Attribut und Bedingung des Lebens;

während definitiv befriedigtes Bedürfnis gleichbedeutend sein würde mit Tod. Es ist so wenig ein Bedürfnis ohne Leben wie ein Leben ohne Bedürfnis denkbar. Ueberdies werden wir finden, daß die übermäßige Befriedigung eines Bedürfnisses dasselbe verstärkt statt es zu schwächen. Es ist noch Niemand zum Säufer geworden dadurch, daß er sich gewöhnte unter dem Maß seines Durstes zu bleiben, und in gleicher Weise, wie die Gewohnheit des Trinkens über den Durst Bier- und Wein-Säufer erzeugt, kann auch die übermäßig, ausschließlich und einseitig erstrebte Befriedigung des Wissensdurstes Wissens-Säufer heranziehen, deren krankhaft unbefriedigter Geist zuletzt Rettung in Schwärmerei und Geistersehorei, wenn nicht im Wahnsinn findet. Beim Denken und Forschen ist so gut eine Diet zu beobachten wie beim Essen und Trinken. Doch die Folgen von Dietfehlern soll man nicht zu normalen Eigenschaften umdeuten, um daran falsche Folgerungen zu knüpfen. Das n o r m a l e Bedürfnis aber, zu denken, zu forschen, zu wissen, kann dadurch, daß es ebenfalls niemals ganz zu befriedigen ist, zu keinem andern Schluß berechtigen, als zu dem, daß seine Nichtbefriedigung eine in den Gesetzen des Lebens begründete Nothwendigkeit ist. Daß das Bedürfnis stets in der Zukunft lebt und auch über den Grenzpunkt des Lebens hinausreicht, ohne darum auf eine Erneuerung dieses Lebens hinzuweisen, ist so wenig ein Widerspruch, wie daß ich die Fortsetzung des Ozeans vor mir sehe, in dem ich versinke.

Lassen wir uns also durch die Unbegrenzbarkeit unseres Wissensdranges nicht zu falscher Ungenügsamkeit verleiten, aber eben so wenig durch die Begrenztheit unseres Wissens zu thörichter Niedergeschlagenheit. Daß wir Alles wissen

wollen, aber nicht Alles wissen können, daß wir stets nach der ganzen Wahrheit verlangen, aber immer nur einen Theil derselben erreichen können, hat schon Manche zur Verzweiflung an der menschlichen Vernunft gebracht und in die Arme des Glaubens getrieben. Sie gehören gewöhnlich zu Denen, von welchen Lessing sagt, „das Ziel ihres Nachdenkens sei die Stelle, wo sie des Nachdenkens müde geworden“. Merkwürdiger Widerspruch, aus Wissensurst auf das Mittel des Wissens zu verzichten, oder Dinge, die dem Forschen unerreichbar waren, erreichen zu wollen durch die Abdankung alles Forschens, den Glauben! Wer wirklich ein ernstes Verlangen hat, hinter die Wahrheit zu kommen, muß von vorn herein Allem ab schwören, was Glauben heißt. Ich rede nicht bloß vom religiösen Glauben. Entweder weiß ich etwas, oder ich weiß es nicht. Im ersten Falle kann von vorn herein von keinem Glauben die Rede sein; im zweiten muß ich das Nichtgewußte entweder bezweifeln, oder nach Gründen als wahrscheinlich gelten lassen. Glauben aber heißt etwas für wahr annehmen ohne ge- rechtfertigten Grund, entweder auf eine Autorität hin, oder aus Schwäche, die sich der Pein der weitern Untersuchung zu entflagen sucht. Das Wort Glauben gehört unbedingt in das Gebiet der Unvernunft und muß aus dem Gebiet der Wahrheitsforschung gänzlich verbannt werden. Die scholastischen Philosophen des Mittelalters haben die Konsequenz der Gläubigkeit am Besten illustriert, indem sie, ähnlich wie im vorigen Jahrhundert der Düsseldorfer Philosoph Jakobi, das Glauben gradezu als philosophisches Prinzip aufstellten und der Erkenntniß nur die Rolle zutheilten, dasselbe zu rechtfertigen. Ihr Satz lautete: „ich glaube, damit ich erkenne.“

Sie hätten sagen sollen: ich schließe die Augen, damit ich sehe.

Doch eine eben so große Thorheit, wie die Abschließung des Forschens durch den Glauben, ist die Verkenntning der N o t h w e n d i g k e i t einer Begrenzung unseres Erkennens und Wissens, dessen unendliches und ewig veränderliches Material auch dann keine Erschöpfung möglich machen würde, wenn unserer Existenz weitere Grenzen gestellt wären. Was ist eher, das Wissen oder sein Gegenstand? Natürlich der letzte, so wie die Speise eher sein muss als die Verdauung. Wenn aber der Gegenstand des Wissens sich stets entrückt, verändert, oder erweitert in die Unendlichkeit hinein, so muss natürlich das Wissen immer hinter ihm her sein und kann ihm niemals ein Punktum setzen. Es gibt ein unendliches Forschen, kein unendliches Wissen. Ein unendliches Wissen ist ein Widerspruch in sich, denn das Wissen kann sich immer nur beziehen auf einen erreichten und erfassten Gegenstand, die Unendlichkeit aber ist unerreichbar und unerfassbar. Deshalb gibt es unter allen Leistungen des Unsinn's, den die Gläubigen oder ihre Lehrer zu Markt gebracht, keine unsinnigere, als die Aufstellung eines allwissenden Geistes. Sie machen ihn sogar allwissend für eine Zeit, wo ihrer Versicherung nach noch kein Gegenstand seines Wissens, keine Welt, existirte.

Wer sich also unglücklich fühlt, weil er die Wahrheit nicht vollständig sich aneignen kann, laborirt einfach an der Thorheit, eine Absurdität vernünftig machen zu wollen, oder die Vernünftigkeit absurd zu finden.

Dieser Thorheit entspricht die andre, die uns zugängliche Wahrheit gering zu schätzen, weil sie uns nicht Aufschluß über alle Probleme gibt. Es hat noch Niemand das

Effen verworfen, weil wir nicht Alles essen können, und wir unterlassen nicht das Gehen, weil wir nicht auch fliegen können. Lessing sagt irgendwo, wenn er die Wahl hätte zwischen der erlangten Wahrheit und dem Suchen nach ihr, so würde er das Letzte wählen. Er scheint die Wahrheit mit jenen Weibern gleichzustellen, die reizend sind so lang man um sie zu werben hat, aber den Reiz verlieren wenn man sie besitzt. Ich kann solcher Auffassung nicht beipflichten, bin aber gleichzeitig der Meinung, daß die Befriedigung über den Besitz der Wahrheit den Reiz des Suchens nach ihr niemals ausschließe. Das Gebiet auch der erreichbaren Wahrheit wird stets in so großer Ausdehnung unerforscht vor uns liegen, daß die Sorge um die unerreichbare eine überflüssige und unberechtigte Voreiligkeit bleibt. Die Endlichkeit oder Begrenztheit des Gebiets der jeweilig erreichbaren Wahrheit aber sollte uns nicht mehr Sorge machen, als die Begrenztheit alles Einbllichen überhaupt. Wären Diejenigen, welche die Unfähigkeit des menschlichen Geistes beklagen, Alles zu erkennen, mehr bestrebt, Dasjenige, was er schon erkannt hat, zur Geltung zu bringen, so würde weniger Mühe und Kraft an die Belämpfung des Glaubens und der Lüge zu verschwenden sein, welche in der intellektuellen Welt die Geisteswucht und in der sittlichen das Unrecht unterhalten.

Doch die Bedenken gegen die Haltbarkeit der Wahrheit haften nicht bloß an der angeblichen Beschränktheit des menschlichen Erkenntnisvermögens, sie heften sich auch an die Gegebenstände der Erkenntnis und haben durch deren Bezeichnung die Frage aufgereggt, ob es überhaupt eine sichere Erkenntnis, also eine Wahrheit, geben könne. Wir kommen damit zu dem zweiten Gegensatz: Wahrheit und Schein.

Die erste Unregung zum Denken erhielt der Mensch durch die ihn umgebenden Erscheinungen der Natur. Sich als Wahrnehmenden von dem Wahrgenommenen unterscheidend, begann er allmälig sich nach seinem Verhältniß zur Außenwelt zu fragen und sich Rechenschaft zu geben über die empfangenen Eindrücke. Doch da diese Eindrücke haften blieben, sich selbstthätig verbanden und allmälig Vorstellungen, Begriffe und Schlüsse erzeugten, ohne daß er sich dieses Prozesses seiner Geistes-Thätigkeit und Entwicklung sofort bewußt wurde, ließ er sich zu dem Irrthum verleiten, die Quelle jener Eindrücke bloß in sich selbst, statt in der Außenwelt zu suchen. Der Baum wuchs, das Thier lief, das Meer wogte, die Sonne schien in seiner Vorstellung, wie früher vor seinen Augen, und regte weitere Vorstellungen an, auch ohne daß er einen wirklichen Baum, ein wirkliches Thier, ein wirkliches Meer, eine wirkliche Sonne noch vor Augen hatte, und so geriet er auf die Einbildung, daß sein Vorstellungs- und Denkvermögen von vorn herein unabhängig von der wechselnden Außenwelt existire und die wahre Welt enthalte. Er lernte sogar rückwärts operiren, indem er den Wahrnehmer zum Urheber des Wahrgenommenen mache und diese Täuschung im Gottglauben auf die ganze Natur ausdehnte. Das von der Natur empfangene Bild und die allmälig aus den erhaltenen Eindrücken entwickelten Begriffe blieben in ihm fixirt, während die Natur selbst überall und fortwährend wechselte, ja sogar durch Erdrevolutionen die Ahnung einer einstigen vollständigen Auflösung begründete. So kam er dazu, als das Bleibende und Wirkliche die Gedankenwelt anzunehmen und die sinnliche Welt nicht bloß zum Vergänglichen, sondern auch zum Scheinenden zu

machen. Es wäre nicht minder konsequent, ein photographisches Portrait für die wirkliche Person auszugeben und diese, weil sie in einem Sarg versenkt wird, statt in einem Rahmen auf die Nachwelt zu kommen, als nicht existirend zu betrachten. Die Gedankenwelt des Menschen verhält sich zur Naturwelt gewisser Maßen wie ein Portrait zur Person. Aber Hegel so gut wie Plato macht die Kopie zum Original, macht die im Menschengehirn durch Abstraktion von der Natur gebildete Idee zum allein Seienden und zugleich zur Schöpferin der Natur, nachdem sie auf diese zurückübertragen ist als „Gott“ und „absolute Idee“. So wird denn das Produkt zum Produzenten und alle natürlichen Folgen bestehender Ursachen verwandeln sich in ideelle Ursachen und Zwecke.

Die ewige Veränderung in der Natur (gegenüber den feststehenden Vorstellungen vom derselben) hat schon den alten griechischen Philosophen die größte Noth gemacht. Es gibt kein Sein, sondern nur ein Werden; „Alles fliegt“ und ist im nämlichen Augenblick, wo ich es als seiend annahme, schon nicht mehr dasselbe, was es war. Ich kann den Fuß nicht zwei Mal in den nämlichen Fluss setzen. So lauteten die Lehren des Heraclit und ähnlich haben spätere Philosophen geredet. Aber was hat die Veränderlichkeit des Seienden mit dem Sein zu schaffen? Dadurch, daß sich etwas verändert, beweist es schon daß Sein, denn wie kann es sich verändern, wenn es nicht ist? Wird ein Organismus, so lang er Leben hat, als bestimmter, individueller Organismus aufgehoben durch die beständigen Veränderungen, die in ihm vorgehen? Bin ich morgen weniger Ich, als heute, weil ich morgen vielleicht ein Pfund weniger wiege, oder eine andre

Blutmischnung habe? Konstituirt die bestimmte Form und der besondere Charakter der in ihren Theilen sich verändernden Gebilde der Natur nicht eben so gut ein zeitweiliges Sein dieser einzelnen Gebilde wie die unzerstörbaren Kräfte und Stoffe, von denen sie gebildet worden, das ewige Sein des unendlichen Ganzen? Will man jenen einzelnen Erscheinungen das Sein deshalb absprechen, weil sie sich stets verändern, so kann man auch den in ihnen wirkenden Kräften das Sein absprechen, weil sie sich stets durch ein verändertes Produkt manifestiren. Nach der Analogie eines Satzes des Cartesius lässt sich sagen: Alles verändert sich, folglich ist Alles. Es gibt aber Philosophen, die im Stande wären zu sagen: die Erde dreht sich, folglich existirt sie nicht. Ferner ist die Veränderung eine conditio sine qua non des Lebens, das Leben manifestirt sich durch fortwährende Veränderung, verbunden mit fortwährender Bewegung. Danach ließe sich der weitere Satz aufstellen: Alles verändert sich, folglich lebt Alles. Um aber den schulphilosophischen Begriff des Seins zu erfüllen, müßte Alles unveränderlich, also todt sein. Philosophischer Schluss: Alles ist todt, folglich ist Alles.

Diejenigen, welche aus der Veränderlichkeit der Erscheinungen der Natur die Folgerung gezogen haben, daß nur diejenige Welt ein wahres Sein habe, welche der s. g. Geist von der wirklichen abstrahirt hat, übersehen merkwürdiger Weise ganz, daß dieser Geist und seine Welt sich ebenfalls fortwährend verändert. Wie wir nicht zwei Mal in den nämlichen Fluß treten können, so können wir auch nicht zwei Mal den nämlichen Gedanken haben. Der zweite, mag er auch im Allgemeinen den nämlichen Inhalt haben, wie der

Fluß im Allgemeinen das nämliche Wasser, wird stets eine andre Uuregung, andre Verbindungen, andre Beziehungen, andre Formen und einen andren Verlauf haben, als der erste. Eben so veränderlich aber sind die R e s u l t a t e unseres Denkens. Man sehe nur, welche ungeheure Reihe von Veränderungen die geistige Entwicklung in jeder Richtung durchlaufen, namentlich aber welche Sprünge die nämliche Philosophie, schon gemacht hat, die uns belehrt, daß das wahre Sein nur in ihrer unveränderlichen Idee liege, die veränderliche Außenwelt aber nur Schein sei. Man wird finden, daß in dem ganzen großen Prozeß der menschlichen Geistes-Entwicklung nichts fest geblieben, als die von der Wissenschaft festgestellten Thatsachen und die der Natur abgelernten Gesetze.

Die s. g. idealistische (richtiger: spiritualistische) Philosophie erhielt ihre erste Haupt-Uuregung von Anaxagoras, der schon etwa 500 Jahre vor der Geburt des ältesten Sohnes des heiligen Geistes lebte und eine von allem Stoff unabhängige und denselben frei beherrschende Intelligenz einführte. Der Hauptvertreter dieser Richtung im Alterthum aber war der s. g. göttliche Plato, der eigentliche Schöpfer des philosophischen Gottes, der sich vor der Gefahr sicherte, gleich seinem ungerecht verurtheilten Lehrer den Giftbecher triaken zu müssen. Er theilte Alles ein in „Dasjenige, das immer ist, aber kein Werden hat, und Dasjenige, das immer wird, aber niemals ist.“ Und auf dem nämlichen Wege einer dualistischen Weltanschauung sind fast alle „idealistischen“ Philosophen, namentlich unsre deutschen, fortgeschritten, von dem altmodischen Schuster Jakob Böhme, welcher, Lessings Ausspruch zufolge, „das Glück gehabt hat, durch seinen

blossen Unsinn der Theosophie Deutschlands zu werden", bis zu dem neumodischen Juwelier Hegel, der „das ganze Universum in das diamantene Netz seiner Logik hineinbaute". (Durch solche Redensarten hat sich eine ganze Generation imponiren lassen, ohne auch nur einen Augenblick zu bedenken, daß sie nichts sind, als vollständiger Unsinn.)

Wenn eine richtige Beurtheilung der Welt, d. i. die Wahrheit soll gefunden werden, so muß nothwendig die Beantwortung der Frage vorausgehen: wer, welches Wesen, welche Intelligenz soll diese Beurtheilung liefern und was soll ihr als entscheidendes Maß dienen? Diese Frage wie ihre Beantwortung kann auf dieser Erdkugel natürlich nur vom Menschen ausgehen, denn es hat sich zur Zeit, so weit unser Gesichtskreis reicht, außer dem Menschen noch keine Wissbegierde und keine Autorität in der Welt gefunden, der es um die Wahrheit zu thun wäre oder an die wir uns wenden könnten. Auch ist es ein trok unsern Philosophen noch nicht entdecktes Kunststück, in der unendlichen Welt zu existieren und doch einen unabhängigen Standpunkt außerhalb dieser Unendlichkeit einzunehmen, um unbefangen beurtheilen zu können, wie sie „an sich" ist. Diese viel verhandelte Frage nach dem „Sein der Dinge an sich" ist schon widersprüchig in sich. Sie kann doch nur aufgeworfen werden von einem Beurtheilenden, dem das Beurtheilte („die Dinge") gegenübersteht, und dennoch setzt sie ein Beurtheiltes für sich allein, ohne Beurtheilenden voraus. Denn die Herrn Philosophen stellen ja auf, daß das Urtheil die Dinge anders nehme, als sie „an sich" d. i. ohne Urtheil existiren. Um ihnen daher das Kunststück möglich zu machen, daß Dinge an sich seien, müssen wir zuvor die menschliche

Intelligenz, die nach ihnen fragt, aus der Welt schaffen und bloß eine geistlose, anorganische oder tote Welt übrig lassen. Das wäre die philosophische Welt an sich. Es ist nur wunderbar, daß die Philosophen nicht bezweifeln, ihr eigener Geist sei „an sich“ anders, als er ihnen erscheint, sondern frischweg Alles für absolute Wahrheit annehmen und ausgeben, was er produziert.

Es bleibt uns also nichts Andres übrig, als bei Beurtheilung der Welt unsern Standpunkt bescheiden innerhalb derselben zu nehmen, unabseheden unser eigenes Urtheil zu Rath zu ziehen und uns selbst d. i. den Menschen zum „Maß der Dinge“ zu nehmen. Wir sind demnach genötigt, als die Wahrheit Dasjenige gelten zu lassen, was das menschliche Erkennungsvermögen als halbar ermittelt.

„Aber, werfen die Philosophen gegen alle Entgegnungen ein, ist es nicht eben eine willkürliche Annahme, daß das menschliche Erkennungsvermögen befähigt sei, die Dinge zu sehen wie sie sind? Selbst wenn wir ihre Geiste nicht bestreiten (eine Gnade, die z. B. Kant gesellt hat um dem Geist das Futter oder Material nicht zu entziehen), so erscheinen sie uns jedenfalls (wie der nämliche Kant behauptet) entstellt oder alterirt durch persönliche Ruthaten, wie die Gesichtspunkte von Raum und Zeit, deren Maß wir überall anlegen (wonach ich also einen Baum nicht als Baum ansehen soll, weil ich mir gleichzeitig denke, wie alt und wie hoch er sein möge). Das Einzige aber, das wir rein und unzweifelhaft erkennen, ist das Erkennen selbst, ist die ideelle Welt in uns, die ihre eigenen Gesetze hat und ihre Entstehung nur einer ideellen Quelle verdanken kann.“ Auf diesem

Punkt angelangt, introduzieren uns dann die Philosophen bei ihrem Gott, der Quelle aller Wahrheit, indem sie bald darzuthun suchen, daß ihre ausgezeichnete Vernunft mit von einer noch ausgezeichneteren Vernunft-Potenz herrühren könne (woraus folgen würde, daß die letzte wieder einer ausgezeichneteren ihren Ursprung verbanke u. s. f.), bald, daß diese Allvernunft existiren müsse, weil ihre philosophische Vernunft nach ihr verlange. So muß Spinoza alle Vorstellungen von Gott vernichten, um die ganze Natur zu Gott zu machen, den er mit dem Beinamen „Substanz“ bezeichnet. So weiß Leibniz, dessen monadenbelebte, d. i. von Theil-Prinzipien erfüllte Welt im Grunde gar keinen Platz für einen Gott als All-Prinzip mehr übrig läßt, ihn doch als kommandirende oder Chef-Monade wieder einzuführen. So sucht Kant, nachdem er alle Beweise Anderer für das Da-sein Gottes verworfen, dessen Existenz nachzuweisen als ein Postulat der praktischen Vernunft. So kommt Fichte, nachdem er früher das Ich an die Spitze gestellt und Gott in die „moralische Weltordnung“ aufgelöst hatte, später als guter Christ zu der Entdeckung, daß „Nichts ist deau Gott“ und daß der Mensch sich selbst vermüthen muß, „um in Gott zu versinken“. Am Konsequenteren von Allen aber versöhrt der Gipfelphilosoph der „Idealisten“^o), der englische Bischof

*) Ich bemerke bei dieser Gelegenheit, daß die gewöhnliche Bezeichnung des Gegensatzes von „Materialist“ und „Idealist“ eine durchaus falsche ist. Der Materialist hört nicht dadurch auf ein Idealist zu sein, daß er Idee wie Geist überhaupt auf eine reale Quelle zurückführt. Der richtigere Gegensatz ist: Materialist und Spiritualist, welch letzter Ausdruck Alle umfaßt, die einen von der Materie unabhängigen „Geist“ annehmen, also die „idealistischen“ Philosophen so gut wie die religiösen Theologen. Die

Berkeley. Er leugnet vollständig und kurzweg die Wirklichkeit der sinnlichen Welt. Was wir in ihr wahrnehmen, sind ihm zufolge nicht die Gegenstände selbst, sondern nur unsre Empfindungen (so daß, wenn der Herr Bischof mit dem Kopf an einen Baum remmt, nur die Empfindung des angegrenzten Baumes existirt, nicht der Baum selbst). Die einzige Existenz des Wahrgenommenen besteht ihm zufolge in der Wahrnehmung. (Folglich existirt auch der Herr Bischof nur in der Wahrnehmung seiner Gläubigen und doch wissen sie so bestimmt wie er selbst, daß er als leibhaftige Existenz Geld von ihnen nimt.) Wie können, meint er, sinnliche Dinge etwas von ihnen so ganz Verschiedenes, wie Empfindungen und Vorstellungen, hervorbringen? (Und doch nahm der Herr Bischof kein sinnliches Pfund Sterling in die Hand ohne sehr heilige Empfindungen und Vorstellungen.) Es existiren, das ist die Spize seiner Lehre, keine materielle Dinge, sondern nur Geister und unsre geistigen Eingebungen können wir nur von einem überlegenen Geist erhalten, der Gott heißt. (Merkwürdig, daß dieser überlegene Geist Jahrtausende lang auf einen englischen Bischof warten mußte, um sich als kommandirender General aller Geister einzuführen zu lassen.) Der Bischof Berkeley wäre ein ausgezeichneter Philosoph für die Hottentotten, die in ihrer Sprache keinen Ausdruck haben für: ich bin.

korrekteste, radikalste Bezeichnung des Gegensatzes wäre: Realist und Nihilist. Die wahren Nihilisten sind eben die Spiritualisten, welche, nachdem sie die reale Welt für Schein ausgegeben, auch den Geist dadurch vernichten, daß sie ihn da suchen, wo er nicht existirt, und da leugnen, wo allein er zu finden ist, nämlich im organischen Gebilde mit fünf Sinnen und einem Gehirn.

Dieser kurze Nachweis zeigt, daß die ganze Bewirrung, welche die angeblichen Hauptkämpfer der Wahrheit, die Philosophen, in die Köpfe gebracht und wodurch sie die ganze Welt auf den Kopf gestellt, die Wirkung zur Ursache, die reale Welt zum Schein und die abstrakte zur alleinigen Wirklichkeit gemacht haben, ursprünglich hervorgeht aus der falschen Auffassung der wahren Natur, Entstehung und Operation unseres Erkenntnisvermögens. Die richtige Lösung der einfachen Frage: wie entsteht das Denken, was ist der Geist, wie operieren unsere Sinne und das Gehirn? — ist der Mittelpunkt aller wahren Erkenntnis und richtigen Weltanschauung; die verkehrte Antwort auf diese Frage aber ist die Quelle aller Irrthümer und die Mutter aller feindlichen Entgegensetzungen gewesen, in welchen die Menschheit durch Verfolgung und Blutvergießen ohne Zahl und Maß für ihren Drang nach Wahrheit hat büssen müssen. Und dafür sind die Philosophen so gut verantwortlich wie ihre Vorgänger, die Religionsstifter.

Cartesius — wie ich nochmals hervorhebe, der Vater der neueren Philosophie genannt — geht davon aus, daß Alles ungewiß sei und bezweifelt werden müsse, nur das Eine nicht, daß Derjenige, der bezweifelt, denkt und das Denken Existenz beweist. „Ich denke, folglich bin ich“. Wodurch nun aber das Denken existire, das zu fragen oder richtig zu beantworten, hat er unterlassen und seine Nachfolger thaten dasselbe. Diejenigen, welche nicht vor dem Wort Materialismus erschrecken, erklären bekanntlich die Entstehung des Denkens eben so einfach wie einleuchtend. Sie sagen: Dasjenige, was unsre Sinne wahrnehmen und den-

Zentral-Bureau der Wahrnehmungen, dem Gehirn, mithilfen, erzeugt dort durch eine Nervenoperation, die wir noch nicht speziell nachweisen können, deren Existenz aber durch unumstößliche Thatachen und Schlüsse festgestellt ist, entsprechende Vorstellungen, welche durch das Kombinations- und Folgerungsvermögen zu Begriffen und Schlüssen zusammenfaßt und ausgebildet, durch das Gedächtniß aber festgehalten werden, und auf diese Weise baut sich in uns die s. g. materielle Welt als „geistiges“ Abbild auf. Und diese geistige Welt, welche sehr eng und arm bleiben würde, wenn jeder Neugeborene ihre Erörterung für sich wieder von Neuem beginnen müßte, bildet sich aus, erweitert sich und bereichert sich durch die Mittel der Uebertragung von einem Individuum auf das andre wie durch Vererbung der Errungenheiten einer Generation auf die andre, während die Natur sich nicht durch Uebertragung oder Vererbung bereichert, sondern auf ihr ursprüngliches Besitzthum beschränkt bleibt. So lernen die Menschen, durch Erbschaft reich geworden, in eingebildeter Selbstständigkeit sich von ihrer Verzorgerinn, der Natur, trennen, während doch in ihnen bloß das Bewußtsein der, der Natur inwohnenden Kräfte und Gesetze wachgeworden, und führen dies Bewußtsein auf eine eingebildete, von der Natur unabhängige Quelle zurück. Ohne Sinne und ohne Dasjenige, was wir durch sie in der Natur wahrnehmen, wäre weder von Vorstellungen noch von Ideen, weder von Religion noch von Philosophie, weder von Subjekt noch von Objekt, weder vom Ich noch vom Nicht-Ich, weder von dem Ding an sich noch von dem Ding für

isch, weder von Substanz noch von Gott, am Wenigsten aber von Wahrheit die Rede. Trotz der größten Hirbeldrüse (in welche Cartesius den Sitz des Denkens verlegt) hätte ohne Sinne und sinnliche Erscheinungen nie ein Mensch einen Gedanken gehabt. Und trotz allen angeborenen wie inspirirten Ideen, wovon die Philosophen faseln, wäre Cartesius wie Leibniz, Kant wie Hegel ein Kretin geworden, wenn sie ohne Gesicht und Gehör, Gefühl, Geruch und Geschmack auf die Welt gekommen oder a la Kaspar Hauser von äußern Wahrnehmungen wären abgeschüttet worden. Die Gegner des „Materialismus“ suchen ihre letzte Rettung in dem Hinweis auf die, namentlich von Kant entwickelten Formen des Denkens, die uns inwohnen, wenn auch, wie sie zugestehen, das erste Material des Denkens von Außen kommt. Die Natur, sagen sie, liefert uns Gegenstände, aber wo liefert sie uns Begriffe und Schlüsse? Man könnte ihnen antworten: Die Natur liefert uns Fleisch und Früchte, aber wo liefert sie uns Speisebrei, Chylus und Blut? Daß der Magen, die Leber, die Lunge in einer bestimmten Weise die Speisen im Blut verwandeln, kann eben so gut auf die spiritualistische Rechnung geschrieben werden, wie daß das Gehirn die aufgefaßten Gegenstände in einer bestimmten Weise zu Denkoperationen benutzt. Mit der Behauptung, daß dem Menschen bestimmte Denkformen, bestimmte Funktionen der Denk-Entwicklung inwohnen, ist nichts weiter gesagt, als daß der menschliche Organismus eine bestimmte Einrichtung besitzt und das Gehirn eben so gut nach bestimmten Regeln operiren muß wie der Magen und sonstige Organe. Und wer es unbegreiflich finden will, daß das Gehirn das von Außen durch signifikante Auffassung empfangene Denkmaterial in an-

deren Formen und Neuerungen wieder produzirt, als den ihm durch die Sinne zugeführten, der muß es auch unbedeutlich finden, daß, was wir als Fleisch, Brod u. s. w. in den Mund stecken, als Haar, Nägel u. s. w. an unserm Körper wieder zum Vorschein kommt, oder gar in seinen Wirkungen als Herzschlag, Nerventhätigkeit und peristaltische Bewegung auftritt.

Uebrigens hat meines Wissens noch kein Philosoph die verfängliche Frage beantwortet, wie es mit den Denkformen der Thiere stehe. Es wird Niemanden mehr einfallen zu leugnen, daß die Thiere, wenn sie auch kein Selbstbewußtsein haben und keine Betrachtungen über sich selbst anstellen können, mit Denkfähigkeit begabt sind, Schlüsse ziehen und danach Entschlüsse fassen wie der Mensch. Sie finden diese Schlüsse u. s. w. eben so wenig in der äußern Natur wie wir, folglich sind wir genötigt, denselben den nämlichen Ursprung zuzuerkennen wie den Denkformen des Menschen. Daraus folgt aber für die Philosophen die Nothwendigkeit, ihre „idealistischen“ und „göttlichen“ Herleitungen auch auf die Thiere auszudehnen und diesen die nämlichen überirdischen Aussichten zu eröffnen wie sich selbst. Warum thun sie das nicht? Warum?

Das Fundament aller Wahrheit liefern also einfach die Funktionen unserer unphilosophischen fünf Sinne und Dasjenige, was wir mit ihrer Hülfe aus der unphilosophischen Natur, dieser Scheinwelt der Spiritualisten, in uns aufgenommen und mit dem Gehirn verarbeitet haben. Das Denken ist von der Natur unterscheidbar und die Lehre von der „Identität des Denkens und Seins“ kann einen wahren Sinn und die rechte

Anwendung mir erhalten durch Ausdehnung auf die Natur, oder vielmehr durch Rückverfolgung in die Natur, indem sie darthut, daß der Mensch, als ein mikrokosmisches Produkt der Natur, durch diesen Ursprung die Fähigkeit erhalten hat, sie auf sinnlichem Wege wieder in sich aufzunehmen und ihr Sein denkend zu reproduziren. Danach würde sich der Ausdruck ändern in: Identität des Denkens mit dem Natursein. Weg also mit der philosophischen Schatten- und Ge- spensterwelt, womit die Menschheit seit Jahrtausenden ge- narrt und der gesunde Menschenverstand eingeschüchtert wor- den ist! Setzen wir den Fuß fest auf, auf diesen irdischen Boden, und vertrauen wir darauf: es gibt eine Wahr- heit und die Natur ist ihre Quelle und der Mensch ist ihr Maß. Es mag sein, es ist sogar wahrscheinlich, daß auf andren Welt - Körpern Wesen existiren, welche es in der Welterforschung weiter gebracht haben als wir. Aber ihr Erkennungs- und Denkvermögen kann sich von dem unsrigen nur quantitativ, nicht qualitativ unterscheiden. Sie können nicht einen Blick haben, womit sie einen Baum für einen Menschen ansehen, und nicht einen Verstand, der aus zwei Mal zwei fünf herausrechnet. Wenn die ganze Welt zu- sammenhängt oder eine Einheit bildet, woran kein Mensch zweifelt, wird sie auch überall ziemlich dieselben Bestandtheile aufweisen und diese Bestandtheile werden in der Form von Weltkörpern auch ziemlich dieselben organischen Wesen erzeu- gen und im Bewußtsein dieser Wesen werden auch überall dieselben Naturkräfte in ziemlich derselben Weise wirksam sein. Man hat noch keine Weltkörper entdeckt, die eine andre Form haben, als die runde. Wahrscheinlich haben auf allen

auch die Schädel die nämliche Form und diese Formen einer gleichartigen Inhalt.

Durch alles Vorstehende ist der Schluss gerechtfertigt: was der Mensch als wahr erkennt, das ist wahr und zwar nicht bloß hier, sondern im ganzen Universum.

„Aber, wirft uns hier ein Gläubiger ein, wenn im menschlichen Geist sich bloß die Natur reproduziert oder abspiegelt, deren Gesetz und Kreislauf feststeht, wie kommt er dann dazu, Irrthümer zu begehen, also von der eingeborenen Richtung abzuweichen?“ Der Gläubige führt uns damit auf den dritten Gegensatz: Wahrheit und Irrthum.

Göthe sagt: „es irrt der Mensch so lang er strebt“. Das Thier irrt nicht, denn es strebt nicht. Weil das Thier vermöge seiner weniger vollkommenen Organisation bloß einem bewußtlosen, begrenzten Triebe folgt, der nicht die Wahl und Macht einer Abweichung von den einfachen Forderungen der Natur hat; weil sein Seelenleben sich nur in dem festen Geleise des Naturtriebes bewegt wie die Seelen der Gläubigen in dem festen Geleise des Dogma, deshalb ist es immer mit sich einig, hat es eine stetige Bahn und bedarf es keines sonstigen Wegweisers zur Erreichung seiner „Bestimmung“. Mit dem Durchbruch des Bewußtseins, mit dem Erwachen derjenigen Kraft, die wir Vernunft nennen und in deren Natur das Bedürfniß wie die Macht der Ausdehnung, des Weiterstrebens liegt, öffnet sich das Gebiet der Unsicherheit, in dem der Irrthum neben der Wahrheit wächst. Grade weil der menschliche Geist sich erst selbst aufbauen muß und von der Natur bloß die Anlage und das Material, nicht aber von einem „Schöpfer“ die Prägung und Ausführung

erhalten hat, grade weil der Mensch erst finden und entdecken muß, was seine Vernunft bedarf, grade weil es ihm kein Versorger fertig überliefert, grade weil in ihm sich ein Bewußtsein aus der Natur heraus entwickelt und dies Bewußtsein außer ihm noch nicht existirt, grade deshalb muß er den Irrthum ausgesetzt sein, während der Gläubige, der all' Weisheit fertig und direkt aus dem Urquell eines umfahrbaren Weltbewußtseins empfängt, ein für alle Mal vor allem Irren bewahrt sein muß, wie er vor allem Streben bewahrt ist.

Der Irrthum ist ein Attribut der Freiheit, denn er ist das Resultat eines Strebens, einer Wahl, eines eigenen Urtheils. Deshalb irrt das Thier so wenig wie der Gläubige. Der Gläubige so gut wie das Thier beweist, daß das sicherste Mittel, sich vor allem Irrthum zu sichern, eine Sicherung vor aller Erkenntniß ist. „Irren ist menschlich“, aber es ist weder thierisch noch katholisch.

Wie schon bemerk't, würden ohne die fünf Sinne keine Ideen im Gehirn entstehen und die Lehre von den „angeborenen“ Ideen ist eine einfache Täuschung. Aber die Linien für die Aufnahme oder den Ansatz der Ideen sind im menschlichen Organismus gezogen und in besonders begabten Köpfen müssen dieselben natürlich eher und ausgeprägter anschließen, als in den weniger günstig organisierten der Mehrzahl. Deshalb sind bis in die dunkelsten Zeiten der Geschichte hinab gleich Dosen in der Wüste leitende Ideen und Grundansichten aufgetaucht, welche noch heute ihre Geltung haben. Sie konnten zur Zeit ihrer Entstehung nicht klar entwickelt und entsprechend verwertet werden, weil ihren Urhebern wie deren Umgebung die Bedingungen dazu fehlten, welche erst die bereicherte Erkenntniß späterer Zeiten liefern konnte.

Deshalb traten sie wieder in's Dunkel zurück, um später abermals aufzutauchen und unter geeigneteren Verhältnissen aufgegriffen zu werden. Ich hebe namentlich diejenige hervor, welche den Menschen zum Mikrokosmos macht — nach meiner Ansicht die Zusammenfassung aller wahren Weltanschauung in Einem Wort. Auf solche Ideen paßt der salomonische Spruch: „Nichts Neues unter der Sonne“ — was sich hier durch die Worte umschreiben ließe: „Die Erkenntniß der Wahrheit war der Anlage nach schon in den ersten Menschen vorgebildet, konnte aber nur durch günstige Einwirkungen und hinreichende Hilfsmittel nach und nach hervorgelockt und zur Reife gebracht werden. Doch wo dies geschah, fand sich immer, daß das Gereifte schon früher gepflanzt war. Der Keim war also, als dem Menschen von der Natur eingeboren, stets vorhanden, aber seine Entwicklung geschah langsam unter dem Einfluß des Irrthums“. Um Das zu ergreifen, was in begabten Köpfen die glückliche Auffassung eines Augenblicks gebiert, hat die Masse der Menschheit oft Jahrhunderte nöthig. Es ist, als drehe sich das geistige Firmament mit seinen Ideen wie das astronominische mit seinen Sternbildern und in den Zwischenzeiten, in welchen die leuchtenden Ideen dem Gesichtskreis entrückt sind, hält der Irrthum seine Ernte unfer dem Schein eines täuschenden Nachlichts. Doch die Arbeit des Irrthums an sich bringt der Wahrheit keine Gefahr. Der Irrthum ist vielmehr der Gehülfe und Provokateur der Wahrheit, so lang er der Berichtigung nicht entzogen wird. Die Gefahr besteht nur darin, daß gewisse leitende, der Kritik entzogene Irrthümer nicht bloß zu einer Gewohnheitsherrschaft gelangen, sondern daß diese Herrschaft durch den Glauben zum

Despotismus wird. Der Irrthum als Dogma ist der Herr der Erkenntniß. Eine Geschichte der Irrthümer ist eine Geschichte der Wahrheit, eine Geschichte der Religionen und Regierungen aber eine Geschichte ihrer Verfolgung.

Der griechische Weise Anaximenes hielt die Sterne für Nägel, an den Kristall des Himmels angeheftet. Andere hielten sie für glühende Bleche.

Anaximander meinte, die Sonne sei eine radsförmige Scheibe, 28 Mal größer als die Erde, hohl und voll Feuer, der sichtbare Theil derselben aber sei eine Deffnung, ähnlich dem Loch an einer Flöte, durch welche das Feuer herausdringe. Eine Sonnenfinsterniß ließ er durch eine Verstopfung des Feuerlochs entstehen; eben so eine Mondfinsterniß.

Anaxagoras war der Meinung, die Sonne sei viel größer, als der Peloponnes. Nach Heraclit hat sie nur die Breite eines Menschenfußes.

Nach Aristoteles ist die Milchstraße eine große entzündete Masse trockener Dünste. Andre erklärtten sie als die zurückgelassene Spur der anfänglichen Sonnenbahn.

Den Stoikern zufolge entsteht der Donner durch ein Zusammenprallen der Wolken und der Blitz ist eine durch das Reiben derselben entstandene Entzündung.

In Bezug auf die Bildung des Embryo stellte Aristoteles die Hypothese auf, es werde die Hüfte, wie am Schiffe der Riel, zuerst gebildet. Nach Andern würde der Anfang mit der großen Zehe oder auch mit dem Nabel gemacht.

Aristoteles hält die Sterne für Thiere. Nach Empedokles entstehen bei den Thieren die Nägel durch Erkalten der Nerven, so weit sie der Luft ausgesetzt sind. Nach einem

andren Philosophen, dessen Name mir entfallen, atmen die Siegen durch die Ohren. U. s. w. U. s. w.

Ich führe diese kindlichen Proben primitiver Naturwissenschaft eines sonst so begabten und erleuchteten Volkes, denen sich noch hundert ähnliche anreihen ließen, bloß an, um sie der jetzigen Naturwissenschaft gegenüberzustellen. Welcher ungeheure Abstand des jetzigen Wissens gegen die damaligen Irrthümer! Jetzt weiß von der Erdkunde, Astronomie, Physik, Naturgeschichte u. s. w. jeder Schulknabe mehr, als der gelehrteste griechische Philosoph des Alterthums. Nun aber vergleiche man mit diesem ungeheuren Unterschied des Wissens und der Erkenntniß in denjenigen Sphären, in welchen der Irrthum dem Forschen und der Berichtigung preisgegeben, mit dem Unterschied in denjenigen, in welchen er durch Gewohnheitsherrschaft und Glauben privilegiert war, nämlich im Gebiet der Sittlichkeit und ihrer Wächterinn, der Religion! Wer will behaupten, daß in diesem Gebiet die Völker jetzt weiter fortgeschritten seien, als die Griechen waren? Welcher aufgeklärte und human gesinnte Mensch wird die Lehren des Katholizismus über die griechische Mythologie stellen? Müßten aber nicht die jetzigen Sitten den höchsten Gipfel der Menschlichkeit und die jetzigen Religionsansichten den höchsten Gipfel der Liberalität erreicht haben, wenn sie bei Prüfung und Ablegung von Irrthümern gleichen Schritt gehalten hätten mit der Ausbildung und Vereicherung der Wissenschaften? Doch während Forschen und Lernen die Menschheit auf der einen Seite vom Irrthum befreite, wurde sie auf der andren von Sitte und Glaube an ihn festgekettet. Und so sind denn die gelehrt Christen der Mehrzahl nach Barbaren geblieben, während schon vor 2000 Jahren die

ungelehrten Griechen der Mehrzahl nach Menschen waren. Die größten Verbrechen in der Geschichte sind stets von De-nen begangen worden, welche sich den offiziellen Beruf an-maßten, die Förderer und Wahrer der Tugend zu sein. Welch kolossales Verbrechen, die mit der Anlage und dem Bedürfnis freier, unaufhörlich forschreitender Erkenntnis geborene Menschheit Jahrtausende lang auf einem und dem nämlichen Irrthum, oder auf einer und der nämlichen Lüge durch Trug und Gewalt festzubannen!

Wir kommen zum vierten Gegensatz: **W a h r h e i t u n d U n w a h r h e i t.** Unter Unwahrheit verstehe ich diejenige Abweichung von der Wahrheit, welche nicht völlig bewußtlos ist wie der Irrthum, aber auch nicht aus verwerflicher Absicht zu täuschen entspringt wie die Lüge.

Doch wenn eine Abweichung von der Wahrheit besprochen werden soll, muß zuvor abgemacht sein, worin Kriterium und Richtschnur der Wahrheit zu finden ist. Ich suchte früher darzuthun, daß, was der Mensch als wahr erkenne und erprobe, auch wahr sein müsse und zwar überall. Was aber kann er als wahr gelten lassen? Um dies festzu stellen, bedarf die Wahrheit eines allgemeinen Erkennungs zeichens, einer allgemeinen Legitimation, eines allgemeinen Prüfsteins. Sie muß auf eine feste allgemeine Grundlage zurückgeführt, es muß ein prinzipieller Fokus und Boden gefunden werden, von dem alle Wahrheit aussstrahlt, oder sich ableiten läßt. Die meisten Philosophen haben diesen Boden selbst geschaffen durch einfache Aufstellung einer Phrase, die ausgesponnen wurde in ein „System“. Der Eine hat uns an das „Sein“, der Andre an das „Werden“, der Eine an das „Ich“, der Andre an das „Denken“, der Eine an die

„Substanz“, der Andre an die „Monade“ adressirt. (Ein neuer Philosoph, Schopenhauer, macht sogar den „Willen“ zum Prinzip der Welt.) Aber selbst wenn der gleichen abstrakte Anknüpfungs- oder Ausgangspunkte an sich, d. h. als abstrakt, logisch haltbar wären, so läßt sich nicht begreifen, was dadurch gewonnen oder festgestellt wird, daß man von der handgreiflichen Grundlage alles Abgeleiteten abstrahirt, um eine neue Grundlage aus diesem Abgeleiteten zu konstruiren, oder daß man das Vorhandene mit neuen Namen belegt um ihm neue Attribute zuzuschreiben. Die Grundlage alles Abgeleiteten ist auf alle Fälle das Nichtabgeleitete und daß alleinige Nichtabgeleitete ist die sinnlich wahrnehmbare, nicht wegzustreitende Natur. Die Natur von einem, im Menschengehirn entstandenen „Geist“ ableiten, wie die Spiritualisten (oder „idealistischen“ Philosophen u. s. w.) thun, oder sie in eine schaffende und geschaffene eintheilen wie Spinoza thut, heißt doch einfach nur einen deus ex machina auftreten lassen, welcher die Erkenntniß der Natur durch seine prätendirte Allwahrheit ersetzen soll. Wie „philosophisch“ das auch sein mag, mir erscheint es gradezu als unsinnig, wenn nicht gar als betrügerisch. Wir können es auf unserm Standpunkt nur als abgemachte Sache behandeln, daß eine Ableitung der Natur von einer über oder außerhalb derselben stehenden, kurz von ihr unabhängigen Kraft eine Absurdität und Unmöglichkeit ist, daß die Natur, als Inbegriff alles Vorhandenen, keine Vorstellung von ihrer Entstehung aufkommen läßt, sondern von Ewigkeit her existirrit und durch sich selbst bestimmt oder bewegt, oder getragen wird. Daz wir von dieser Selbstbestimmung, oder Selbstbewegung, oder von diesem Selbsttrieb

der Natur keinen erschöpfenden Begriff haben, ist wahrlich kein Grund, eine andre Bestimmungskraft für sie anzunehmen, von der wir noch viel weniger einen Begriff haben, ja deren Möglichkeit wir durch keinen Vernunftschluß darthun können. Die Frage nach einer Ur-Ursache des Existirenden (der Natur) ist eine vollständig müßige, sich in eine unendliche Leere verlierende. Die Ur-Ursache muß zusammenfallen mit der Ur-Existenz. Mit der Ur-Existenz aber muß auch gleich die Bedingung dieser Existenz, nämlich die Fähigkeit, sich fortzusetzen d. i. zu leben, sich zu bewegen und alle Erscheinungsformen zu schaffen, verbunden sein. Eine Ur-Existenz ohne diese Bedingung ist eben so wenig denkbar wie eine Bedingung, welche jener Existenz vorhergegangen d. i. eine existenzlose Existenzbedingung (ein schaffender „Gott“ u. s. w.)

Ueber die Natur hinaus ist also weder räumlich, noch zeitlich, noch genetisch, noch bestimmend ein Prinzip zu suchen. Sie allein mit ihren ewigen Stoffen, Kräften und Gesetzen ist das Prinzipielle und Maßgebende. Sie steht da unzerstörbar wie unableitbar und unbestimmbar als Urgrund, Urthatssache und Uragens. Mögen wir ein noch so mächtiges Verlangen haben, ihr gleichsam geistig in den Rücken zu tasten um einen Anfang oder eine Entstehungsquelle oder ein Agens hinter ihr zu suchen, so wird doch dies Verlangen ewig auf die unausdenkbare Unendlichkeit stoßen, welche alle Vorstellung von etwas hinter oder vor der Natur Existirendem zunichte macht. Natur oder Welt ist Alles, außer ihr nichts; was aber in ihr ist, kann auch nur als zu ihr gehörig und als ihr entsprechend aufgefaßt werden. Demnach ist auch keine Wahrheit möglich ohne Einbegrenzung.

in die Natur und ohne Uebereinstimmung mit ihr und wer die Natur erfaßt, hat die Wissenschaft für alle Wahrheit gefunden. Wenn es eine Wahrheit gibt, so muß sie in der Wirklichkeit gesucht werden und was ist wirklich außer der Natur?

Aus dieser Natur herausgeboren, also als ihr Produkt und demnach auch ihr entsprechend, hat der Mensch von ihr und von ihr allein nicht bloß die Fähigkeit und das Bedürfnis erhalten, sich zu ihr zurückzuwenden indem er sie sinnlich anfaßt, sondern auch, indem er aus den Eindrücken dieser Auffassung eine Gedankenwelt konstruiert. So weit er bei dieser Konstruktion mit den Naturgesetzen in Uebereinstimmung bleibt, muß er die Wahrheit repräsentiren; so fern er davon abweicht, die Unwahrheit, deren erste Quelle der Irrthum ist. Und das Hauptgebiet dieser Gedankenwelt repräsentirt die Wissenschaft, deren Basis und ewige Ausgangsquellen die Naturwissenschaft bleibt. Ohne Naturwissenschaft gibt es so wenig ein Wissen, wie es ohne Natur eine Existenz gibt. Und Alles, was sich Wissenschaft nennt, aber nicht in der Natur wurzelt, ist entweder Phantasie oder Trug. Was bleibt von einer theologischen „Wissenschaft“, die den Menschen so viel zu schaffen gemacht, nach übrig, nachdem die Naturerkennnis die Unmöglichkeit eines Geistes ohne Gehirn dargethan hat? Ist die theologische Naturwissenschaft, z. B. die eines Agassiz, welche in den organischen Gebilden den Gang eines göttlichen Schöpfungsplans nachweiset, mithin die Naturerscheinungen auf das Prokrustesbette einer Pfaffen-Phantasie und -Politik spannt, etwas Andres als ein Humbug? Ist die „Rechts-Wissenschaft“ etwas Andres als eine Wissenschaft des Unrechtthums, wenn

sie nicht von den natürlichen Menschenrechten ausgeht? Wird aus der Philosophie, welche den Geist aller Wissenschaften in einem Erkenntnis-Mittelpunkt auffangen soll, um das Gesamtgebiet der menschlichen Forschung mit dem Licht allgemeiner Wahrheit zu übergießen, etwas Anderes, als ein System der Täuschung, wenn sie den festen Boden der sinnlichen Natur aufgegeben, um ihren Anhalt im Reich der „Idee“ zu suchen?

Doch mit der Fähigkeit und dem Bedürfnis, die Natur zu erkennen und in einer Gedankenwelt zu reflektiren, hat der Mensch auch die Fähigkeit und das Bedürfnis erhalten, sie zu kopiren und in einer Gestaltenwelt zu erneuern. Dies ist seine Anlage zur Kunst. Wäre er mit dieser Anlage im Stande, an den Hervorbringungen der Natur sich direkt zu betheiligen, so würde er ihre Erscheinungen oder Gebilde leibhaftig nach seinen Einfällen und Wünschen vervielfältigen. Er würde Pflanzen wie Landschaften, Thiere wie Menschen nach seiner Konzeption leibhaftig und lebendig schaffen statt sie als tote Kopien mit Meißel und Pinsel darzustellen. Da er aber diese, aus dem Leben schaffende Thätigkeit seiner eigenen Schöpferin, der Natur, allein zu überlassen genötigt ist, muß er sich zum Ersatz begnügen, ihr in abstrahirten Gestaltungen nachzuahmen wie in abstrahirten Gedanken, und das Feld dieser Nachahmung ist die Kunst. Der aus der unendlichen Natur ihm eingeborene Trieb in's Unendliche drängt den Menschen, in seiner Gestaltungs- wie in seiner Gedankenwelt das Schönste und Höchste zu erstreben, und wir bezeichnen dies mit dem Wort Ideal. Das Ideal ist, in der Ethik so gut wie in der Ästhetik, das eigentlich Wahre in der Abstraktion: es setzt sich

zusammen aus den vollendetsten Erscheinungen der Natur. Soll ein Maler in einem Wald einen Baum abbilden, den man den wahren Baum nennen könnte, so wird er den zugleich gesündesten, stärksten und schönsten, sicher nicht das Gegentheil aussuchen. Denken wir uns einen wahren Menschen, so tragen wir auf ihn alle menschliche Vorzüge und Vollkommenheiten zusammen, die sich harmonisch vereinigen lassen. Wollen wir einen wahren Republikaner, so erwarten wir von ihm eine möglichst vollständige und tabellose Vertretung der republikanischen Grundsätze. Kurzum, das Ideal ist überall die Darstellung der höchsten Wahrheit. Es schlägt aber sofort in sein Gegentheil, die Unwahrheit, um, sobald wir es mit Attributen versehen, welche die Natur als unmöglich darthut oder nirgendwo aufzuweisen hat.

Man nimmt gewöhnlich die Kunst als Gegensatz zur Natur, sie ist diesel aber im Grunde nur, sofern sie einen Gegensatz gegen die Wahrheit bildet. Faßt man den Menschen als ein fortsezendes und vervollkommenendes Glied des Naturlebens, so stellen sich seine Produkte als eine Fortsetzung und Vervollkommenung der Naturprodukte dar. Auch die Fiktion oder Erfindung ist dabei kein Widerspruch gegen die Wahrheit. Sie ist nur ein Mittel der Freiheit, ohne welche die wahre Kunst nicht existirte und sie es höchstens zu einer slavischen Kopistinn der Wirklichkeit brächte. Wo die Kunst nicht bestimmte Objekte aus der Natur und dem Leben nimmt, ist sie auch nicht an bestimmte Objekte gebunden, sie hat die Freiheit, von der Wirklichkeit das ihr Dienliche zu abstrahiren und das Gegebene für ihre Zwecke zu benutzen. Wenn ihre Darstellungen nur in der Wirklichkeit möglich sind, brauchen sie nicht auchlopieren der Wirklichkeit zu

sein. Erst bei der Unmöglichkeit beginnt für sie die Unwahrheit. Ein Künstler mag eine Venus malen so schön wie keine in der Wirklichkeit existirt, vorausgesetzt daß sie existiren kann, daß sie keine Eigenschaften besitzt, welche der weiblichen Natur nicht gegeben sind, und daß die ihr beigelegten Eigenschaften sowohl unter sich wie mit der Gesamtidee harmoniren. Nur beim Portraitiren oder unmittelbaren Kopiren fällt die Wahrheit mit der Wirklichkeit zusammen. Doch auch da ist eine Verschönerung („Schmeicheln“) gestattet, aber nur so weit, als der kopirte Gegenstand selbst sie in seinen günstigsten Momenten erreichen kann.

Keine Kunst gibt uns zur Anwendung dieser Bemerkungen mehr Anlaß und Gelegenheit, als die Poesie. Streichen Sie aus den Hunderttausenden von Volumen, worin die dichtende Menschheit ihre Gefühle zu Markt gebracht, alles Unwahre, alles der Natur Widersprechende aus und die ganze poetische Literatur schmilzt zu wenig Bänden zusammen. Es würde eine besondere Abhandlung erfordern, dies nur in einer Auswahl von Beispielen nachzuweisen. Gölhe, einer der schlichtesten und wahrsten unserer Dichter, nennt seine meisten Gedichte Gelegenheitsgedichte. Das heißt mit andren Worten: sie hatten eine wirkliche Veranlassung im Leben, sie bilden den wahren Ausdruck erlebter Stimmungen, sie sind nicht gemacht, sondern entstanden, während die meisten Poeten nicht bloß die Gefühle machen, durch die sie uns interessant werden wollen, sondern ihnen auch einen Ausdruck geben, der wahre Gefühle lächerlich machen müßte. Unter hundert Gedichten, worin unsre Verskünstler ihre Stimmungen darstellen, ihre Phantasien wiederspiegeln, ihre Schmerzen klagen, ihre Liebsie besingen, die Natur bewun-

tern, ihre Schicksale schildern und ihre „Begeisterung“ loslassen, gibt es nicht ein halbes Dutzend, welche nicht Jeden, der sie in sein Leben als Stücke leibhaftiger Individualität übertrüge, mit ihren Uebertreibungen und falschen Bildern zum reisen Tollhäusler oder abgeschmackten Komödianten stempeln würden. Um Widerlichsten sind die Poeten von Profession, welche nicht einmal Inspirationen abwarten, sondern sie selbst erzwingen, beständig den Sporn in den Weichen ihres abgejagten Pegasus haben und fortwährend an der Arbeit sind, Herz und Kopf förmlich auszuquetschen, um ihr Quantum „Gefühl“ und „Kraft“, sogar Thränen und Schicksalswehen auf den Markt zu liefern. Man glaubt, solch ein Märtyrer sei unaufhörlich am Verscheiden oder auf irgend eine Folter gespannt, er stöhnt und ächzt, als sei aller Weltschmerz der Christenheit in seinem Herzbeutel komprimirt, und sieht man sich den Burschen leibhaftig an, so strozt er von frecher Eitelkeit oder er treibt sich herum als charakterloser Strolch, der mit Herzeleid und Seelenqual die Theilnahme der Leser für seine Erbärmlichkeit in Kontribution zu setzen sucht.

Doch · Das gilt hauptsächlich von der lyrischen Poesie. Mehr noch, als in dieser, wird gegen die Wahrheit in der dramatischen gesündigt und da diese das Leben selbst in handlender Nachahmung vor unsre Augen bringen soll, sind ihr Abweichungen von der Wahrheit um so weniger nachzusehen. Wie wenig Theater-Stücke aber gibt es, die durch Charakteristik, durch Verlauf der Handlung und durch Sprache den Ansforderungen der Wahrheit genügen! Selbst Shakespeare, den man als ein Muster von Wahrheit aufstellt, und zwar in Bezug auf Charakterdarstellung im Allgemeinen mit

Recht, wie viel Gewalt thut er der Wahrheit nicht an durch seine geschaubte, aufgetriebene und überladene Sprache, die jeden Menschen im wirklichen Leben, wäre auch das Pathos aller geläufig, zum Gegenstand des Spottes machen müßte! Am Rücksichtlosesten aber versündigt er sich gegen die Wahrheit durch einen oft bis zur Lächerlichkeit forcirten Verlauf der Handlung und durch die Anwendung eben so unmündiger wie unsinniger Effektmittel aus dem Reiche des Überglaubens. „Geister“ und Hexen in einem historischen Stück als handelnde Personen auf die Bühne zu bringen, wo sie ganz ernsthaft für wirkliche Wesen genommen werden und Konversationen führen, ist ein noch verwerflicherer Humbug und Theater-Koup, als das Auftreten des Hundes, der in Weimar Goethe von der Bühne vertrieb. Die so gedankenlos angestammte Geistes-Erscheinung im Hamlet, jene unsterbliche Königs-Seele auf Urlaub, ist überdies durch das Stück selbst verurtheilt, indem sie als treibende Macht hinter einen philosophischen Helden gehezt wird, der in seinem berühmten Monolog die Unsterblichkeit der Seele bezweifelt. Vielleicht wäre Shakespeare vor solchen Verirrungen in die Welt des Überglaubens bewahrt geblieben, hätte er nicht, wie die meisten dramatischen Dichter, die Unterthanen-Manie gehabt, seine Haupthelden aus der Reihe der Fürsten zu nehmen, in deren unheimlicher, verbrecherischer Sphäre Spuk und Gespenster von je her zu Hanse waren. (Dass ich den Vorwurf wegen Benutzung übergläubischer Hilfsmittel nicht auch auf den Faust ansbehne, welcher von vorn herein auf dem Boden der symbolisirenden Darstellung steht, und nicht für die Bühne bestimmt ist, bedarf keiner weiteren Versicherung oder Rechtfertigung.) Was übrigens die

Sprache betrifft, so würde Shakespeare in ihr der Wahrheit treuer geblieben sein, wenn er nicht dem unseeligen Geschmack gehuldigt hätte, Dramen in Versen zu schreiben. Nach meinem Urtheil gibt es nichts Abgeschmackteres, als wenn auf den Brettern, welche die Welt bedeuten, Menschen in jener steifen, geschräubten, stelzenhaften, naturverhöhnen- den Sprache auftreten, die dem Publikum im flüssigsten Iambenversen die Noth des Poeten wie des Schauspielers förmlich vormüht oder vorstabdirt.

Doch die Poeten, die nichts unbesungen gelassen, was die Menschheit verdunnt, geknechtet und geschändet hat, erinnern mich daran, daß die Unwahrheit nicht unsre letzte Station bildet und daß wir noch eine höhere Etage zu besuchen haben, wo die Amme der meisten Poeten wie der meisten Prosaiker, nämlich die Lüge wohnt. An ihrer Hand, ob-schon mit den Poeten beginnend, treten wir aus dem Ideen-Reich in das wirkliche Leben ein. Nachdem wir das Gebiet der Erkenntniß und das der Kunst mit einem Ueberblick durchmessen, langen wir im Gebiet der Sittlichkeit an, worin die Wahrheit kämpft mit der Lüge.

Die Lüge! Müßten wir die Natur nicht ausnehmen, welche allein nicht lügt weil sie nicht kann, so wäre die Lüge ein eben so umfassendes Wort, wie die Wahrheit. Wer kann mir einen Winkel im Bereich der zivilisierten Menschheit nennen, wo keine Lüge zu Hause ist? Ließen Lügen sich mit der Flinten erlegen, jeder Schuß, nach einer beliebigen Richtung abgefeuert, brächte eine Lüge zu Boden. Wie im Faust gesagt wird, daß das Leben, wo man es nur packt, interessant sei, so läßt sich auch sagen: wo man es packt, bleibt Einem eine Lüge an den Fingern hängen. Ich spreche, nota bene,

von dem Leben der zivilisierten Menschheit, die nach Noahs Zeiten neu aufgelegt wurde. In einem selten gewordenen Buch, den Memoiren des Abbe Moreslet über die französische Revolutionsperiode, las ich neulich einen humoristischen Brief Franklins über das Weintrinken, worin er, von dem Wort "in vino veritas" ausgehend, darthut, daß die Menschen vor Noahs Zeiten keine Wahrheit gekannt, weil sie keinen Wein gehabt, und deshalb zu Grunde gehen mußten; die zweite verbesserte Auslage aber, durch Noah mit dem Quell der Wahrheit beglückt, habe erst Anspruch auf eine dauernde Existenz gewonnen. Das lautet recht hübsch, namentlich im Munde eines Yankee. Aber Franklin hat nicht bedacht, daß die Uretern der vornoahschen Menschheit vom „Schöpfer“ des Weinstocks für die erste Wahrheit, die sie beginnen, schon aus dem Paradiese gejagt wurden. Auch lehrt leider die Geschichte, daß erst nach der Wasser-Silndfluth, welche die erste Menschheit verschlungen haben soll, jene Silndfluth von Lügen in die Welt kam, gegen welche ein Ozean von Wein kein Gegenmittel liefern könnte. Voltaire erzählt irgendwo, um die Religion der Liebe zu charakteristren, von zwei Schiffbrüchigen, welche sich an eine unbekannte Küste retten und beim Bordringen in's Innere von der größten Furcht erfüllt sind, auf Wilde zu stoßen und lebendig gefressen zu werden. Plötzlich aber sieht Einer von ihnen in der Ferne einen Galgen stehen und beruhigt ruft er aus: „Gottlob, wir sind in einem christlichen Lande!“ Aehnlich könnte Einer, zum Willkommen mit einer ausgesuchten Lüge empfangen, beruhigt ausrufen: „Gottlob, wir sind in einem zivilisierten Lande.“ In der That, die Lüge ist ein Kind der Zivilisation und da wir

schon von ihren gefeiertesten Repräsentanten, den Poeten, gesprochen haben, können wir ihnen gleich das Zeugniß ertheilen, daß sie als Puzmacher und Friseure der Lüge zur Verbreitung und Beliebtheit derselben vielleicht nicht weniger beigetragen haben, als die Wächter und Vormünder der Lüge, die Pfaffen.

Durchmustern wir die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren verschiedenen Schichten und Thätigkeitsphären, Kündgebungen und Bestrebungen, so könnten wir versucht werden zu glauben, der Mensch sei zur Lüge geboren. Gehen Sie von der unschuldigsten Manifestation, der täglichen Unterhaltung, aus: wie viel Menschen finden Sie, die nur bei der einfältigsten Erzählung, bei dem unbedeutendsten Thatsachenbericht, geschweige bei der Beurtheilung anderer Personen, zuverlässig sind und sich einer korrekten Mittheilung befleißigen! Schon des bloßen Effekts wegen greifen die Meisten zur Lüge. Die Lüge ist ein vortreffliches Mittel der Satyre, wenn sie, wie im Münchhausen, die Lüge selbst durch Uebertreibung bloßstellt, oder, wie im Don Quixote, durch den lächerlichen Eindruck der Ueberbietung dem der gegeihesten Wirklichkeit nachhilft. Aber wo sie nicht entweder einen satyrischen oder einen humoristischen Zweck und Ursprung hat, sollte sie überall Gewissenssache sein. Armes Gewissen! Würde dasselbe nicht schon jedem Weibe Unbehagen verursachen müssen, das durch seine Kleidung die Welt über ihre Körperperformen belägt? Jedem Brähler, der großthut mit erlogenem Thaten? Jedem Schriftsteller, der ein Buch in dem unwiderstehlichen Drang herausgibt, die Menschheit zu retten, während er nur an Honorar oder Zeitungsgeld denkt? Jedem Kritiker, der aus Kameraderie nichtige Literaturpro-

dakte als epochemachende Schöpfungen ausposaunt und
lesenswerthe Erzeugnisse unabhängiger Geister in den Roth-
reißt oder der öffentlichen Beachtung zu entziehen sucht? Jedem Handschütteler, der Niemanden anreden kann, ohne
ihn zu seinem „besten Freund“ zu machen? Jedem „gehör-
samsten Diener“, der mit besonderer Hochachtung seine
Briefe an alle Diejenigen unterzeichnet, die er innerlich zum
Heuler wünscht? Jedem Kaufmann, der „zum Einkaufs-
preise“ verkauft, wenn er weniger als 50 Prozent Profit
macht? Jedem Wirth, auf dessen Flaschen „Johannisber-
ger“ figurirt, während der Inhalt aus moderirter Essigäsüre
besteht? In allen Beziehungen und Verhältnissen des
gewöhnlichen Lebens, wo können Sie sich einlassen und beob-
achten, ohne der Lüge zu begegnen, die in allen möglichen
Formen, bald als einfache Umkehrung der Wahrheit, bald
als Brühlerei, bald als Verstellung, bald als Heuchelei, bald
als Schmeichelei, bald als Verleumdung, bald als Betrug,
bald als Verrath ihr Wesen treibt? Und die Meisten lügen
eben so viel durch Das was sie verschweigen, wie durch Das
was sie sagen, so daß unter Tausenden nicht Einer aus der
Welt scheidet als Das was er wirklich war. Manchen Menschen
ist die Lüge so sehr zur Regel, zum Bedürfniß, zur zweiten
Natur geworden, daß ihnen an Andren die Wahrheitsliebe
förmlich zu einem Element der moralischen Entwertung
wird. Sie wären im Stande zu sagen: jener Mensch ist
schlecht, denn er lügt nicht. Sie wären im Stande zu sa-
gen: In Dem, was jener Mensch sagt, kann er nicht wider-
legt, in Dem, was er thut, kann er nicht getadelt
werden und sein Charakter verdient alle Anerkennung, aber
— man kann ihm nicht trauen, denn er sagt immer die Wahr-

heit. Will man jedoch einem Menschen, der die Wahrheit spricht, das Allerschlimmste nachsagen und in ihm einen Auskund von Verwerflichkeit darstellen, so nennt man ihn „d u r c h a u s u n p r a k t i s c h“ und man sagt ihm nur aus Mitleid eine wohlwollende Schmeichelei, wenn man ihn bloß verrückt oder wahnsinnig nennt. Und so ist denn die große Masse der Menschheit praktisch genug, fast in Allem zu lügen was sie sagt und thut, wie in Allem was sie verschweigt und unterläßt.

Selbst in dem natürlichssten Wechselverhältniß des Lebens, dem der Liebe—welche Heuchelei, welche Perfidie, welche Lügel „Ich liebe dich“ heißtt in den meisten Fällen so viel wie: ich will dich betrügen. Dabei wäre die Beantwortung der Frage von Interesse, welches der beiden Geschlechter sich am Meisten der Lüge befleißige und die größte Virtuosität darin entwidde, dasjenige, welches seine Liebe „erklärt“, oder dasjenige, welches sie „bekennit“? Ohne Zweifel dasjenige Geschlecht, welches das Meiste thut und sich gefallen läßt, wobei die Lüge als Hülfsmittel dient, also gegen Schwäche am Uebermuthigsten Thrannei übt und sie am Ruhigsten von Mächtigen erduldet, am Meisten spekulirt und am Meisten schachert, am Meisten politisirt und am Meisten diplomatisirt. Welches diess Geschlecht sei, will ich nicht verrathen, da die Majorität meiner Zuhörer zum männlichen gehört. Was auch schon mag gethan worden sein, die Verstellungs- und Lügen-Kunst der Weiber in Romanen und Theaterstücken darzustellen, so haben doch die Männer ihnen unwillkürlich Gerechtigkeit widerfahren lassen durch die bemerkenswerthe Thatsache, daß es noch keinem Manne eingefallen ist, in einem weiblichen Don Juan ein Ideal der

Lüge zu verherrlichen und die Herabwürdigung der Liebe zu preisen.

Steigen wir nun aus dem gewöhnlichen Leben in andre Sphären hinaus, namentlich in die politische, so sehen wir, wie jener Ritter den Wald vor lauter Bäumen, die Lüge vor lauter Lügen nicht mehr. Adressiren wir uns an den Ersten Besten: er ist ein Zeitungsschreiber, der ein „Organ der Wahrheit“ herausgibt. „Lügen wie gedruckt“, „er lägt wie eine Zeitung“ — das sind hurrante Redensarten geworden, die höchstens noch eine moderne Verstärkung erhalten könnten durch die Wendung: er lägt wie der Telegraph. Wenn Sie mir im Lande der Pressefreiheit sechs Zeitungsschreiber nennen, die keine Lüge sagen und keine Wahrheit verschweigen, so mache ich mich anheischig, sogar in Amerika an große Männer zu glauben. Ad vocem „große Männer“. Haben Sie schon einen einzigen gesehen, der nicht, wie man einen Schneemann aus Schneeklumpen zusammensklebt, aus den Lügen der Zeitungsschreiber, Parteihelden und sonstigen Spezialisten zusammengesetzt war? Haben wir es doch mit Hilfe dieser Vertreter der Wahrheit in jüngster Zeit sogar so weit gebracht, daß Derjenige ein Muster von „Ehrlichkeit“ werden kann, der das republikanische Gouvernement umwandelt in eine Assuranz-Anstalt für jede Unehrlichkeit. In der Gesellschaft des Zeitungsschreibers und des „großen Mannes“ finden wir auch den Politiker von Profession, einen Biedermann erster Klasse, den noch kein Lügner einen Taugenichts genannt hat. Ihm nähert sich einer jener feinen Herrn, die man Diplomaten nennt und welche die Sprache benutzen, um ihre Gedanken zu verbergen, wenn sie welche haben, oder den Schein von

Gedanken zu erregen, wenn sie keine haben. Hinter dem Diplomaten steht in der Ferne einer jener geheiligten Wahrheitsfreunde, welche die Krone vom Tisch des Herrn nehmen und nicht bloß in jeder Todesangst Verfassungen beschwören, um sie später umzustürzen, sondern auch alle Tage versichern, daß sie nichts Andres wollen, als das Wohl der Unterthanen die sie knechten. Bedarf die Wahrhaftigkeit Sr. Majestät aber noch eines glaubwürdigen Gewährsmanns, so steht zu seinen Füßen jenen zerknirschten Unterthan, welcher, den Stachel der tödlichsten Beleidigung im Herzen, durchaus glaubwürdig versichert, daß er aus Liebe zu seinem König ersterbe und im Interesse der „Krone“ Gut und Blut zu opfern bereit sei. Um sich aber in ihrer Glaubwürdigkeit gegenseitig zu verstärken, versammeln sie sich zuletzt alle miteinander in der Kirche und singen begeistert: „Num danket alle Gott“. Nachdem sie die ganze Erde voll gelogen, lägen sie jetzt den tauben Himmel an, der sie alle so glücklich gemacht hat, und um sich gegenseitig zu trösten über Das, was „Gott“ ihnen heute versagt, danken sie ihm inbrünstig für Das, was er ihnen gestern nicht gegeben hat. Das ist die Krone der Lügerei, daß der Mensch, nachdem er sie bei allen seinen Mitmenschen nach Möglichkeit praktizirt hat, zuletzt in die Runde sein eigenes Selbst bestellt und dabei im Ernst versichert, das höchste Gut sei die Wahrheit.

Daz unter solchen Umständen Derjenige, welcher die Wahrheit, die wahre Wahrheit, geltend machen will, also die Lüge aufzudecken muß, unter den Menschen im Allgemeinen kein willkommener Gast ist, geht mit sehr natürlichen Dingen zu. „Den Berrath liebt man, aber man haft den Berräther“. Mit der Wahrheit, obschon sie ganz anderer

Natur ist, verhält es sich ebenso: man liebt die Wahrheit übermäßig, aber man haft Den, der sie sagt. Nur wer sie selbst übt, kann sie ertragen. Wie auf einem Maskenball Niemand zugelassen wird, der nicht ein künstliches Gesicht trägt, so ist in dieser verlogenen und verheuchelten Welt Niemand erträglich, der seine freie Menschennatur bewahrt hat und fähig geblieben ist, sich der Lüge zu schämen. Deshalb ist es gut, daß wenigstens eine Person in der Welt existirt, die, von den Menschen ganz unabhängig, ihnen die Wahrheit in den Folgen ihrer Lügen lehrt und diese Person ist die Nemesis, die Göttin der Logik.

Aber, versichert uns ein Professor, es gibt einen Tempel, worin die Wahrheit ihr Licht stets siegreich leuchten läßt, und dieser Tempel ist die Geschichte. „Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht“. Wohlan, wenn die Geschichte der Menschheit ihr Gericht ist, so ist der Geschichtschreiber ihr Richterschreiber. Wir erleben jetzt selbst ein Stück Geschichte. Sie rollt sich ab vor unsern Augen am hellen Tage und das Protokoll des Prozesses wird von tausend Federn geführt, die vollkommene Freiheit haben ein photographisch treues Bild des Geschehenden zu liefern. Nun wünschte ich Den zu sehen, der aus diesen Protokollen eine wahrheitgetreue Geschichte der Sklavenhalter-Rebellion und ihrer Bekämpfung zusammensetze. Sehen wir nicht alle Tage vor diesem amerikanischen Weltgericht das Recht zum Unrecht machen, die Ursache in die Wirkung verkehren, die Folgen von unaufhaltlichen Ereignissen als Verdienste Derer umdeuten, welche sich vergebens ihnen entgegenstemmten, die schreiendsten Thatsachen ignoriren, die offenbarsten Motive vertuschen, die empörendste Unfähigkeit in Weisheit, unlängbare Verbrechen

in patriotische Handlungen und die Verbrecher der Republik in ihre Retter umwandeln? Sehen wir nicht schon jetzt im Hintergrunde die segnende Hand der Nachwelt sich über Köpfe ausstrecken, in deren deselben oder unsäuberem Gehirn all das schreckliche Unheil, dessen Zeugen wir täglich sind, seinen wahren Ursprung hat, während Andre, welche die Fähigkeit und den Willen hatten, jenes Unheil abzuwenden, vergessen oder verdammt werden? In der Geschichtsschreibung ist, wie in der Geschichte selbst, die Lüge stets die Gehilfinn der Macht, die Wahrheit aber verhallt im Getöse des Krieges und für das Urtheil der Nachwelt bleibt kein anderer Halt, als der Erfolg, umgeben von dem falschen Ruhm Derer, welchen dieser Erfolg am Wenigsten zu verdanken ist.

Von diesen Erfahrungen der Gegenwart ziehe man nun einen Schluß auf die Akkuratesse und Wahrhaftigkeit, womit das Protokoll des „Weltgerichts“ in früheren Zeiten geführt wurde, wo keine Doffentlichkeit, kein freies Wort existierte und die Gewalthaber und ihre Gehilfen jedes Mittel der Lüge ungehindert und unbeschränkt ausbieten konnten. Wer die heutige Geschichte machen und beschreiben sieht, muß misstrauisch gegen alle Darstellung der früheren werden. Er kann, wo sie von Machthabern redet, höchstens ihrem Tadel, nie aber ihrem Lobe trauen. Das Einzige, was die Geschichte als „Weltgericht“ mit Sicherheit, aber nur in allgemeinen Umrissen, darthut, das sind die endlichen Folgen der Abweichungen von der Wahrheit; doch diese Folgen treffen leider selten die eigentlichen Urheber.

Woher alle diese Abweichungen? Woher alle diese Verbrechen gegen die Wahrheit? Wie sollen wir uns die allge-

meine Leidenschaft der Menschen für die Lüge erklären, während sie doch alle ein Verlangen nach der Wahrheit haben, die nicht bloß ein Bedürfniß ihrer Vernunft, sondern auch die einzige Richtschnur für die Wahrung ihrer allgemeinen Interessen ist? Ist der menschlichen Natur die Lüge ein Bedürfniß? Nein! Die Lüge ist nur ein Produkt der Verhältnisse, in welche die Menschen durch die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft zu einander gerathen sind. Die Lüge ist das Hülfs- und Nothmittel des ewigen Kriegs, in welchen die Menschen fort und fort durch ihre gegenseitige unnatürliche, unvernünftige und ungerechte Stellung mit einander verwirkt werden. Ursprünglich haben die Menschen nicht gelogen, sie haben nur geirrt. Aber sie belogen einander, sobald sie einander fürchten lernten, und diese Furcht wurde allgemein, als ihre Irrthümer sich verkörperten zu Sitten und Institutionen, Gesetzen und Religionen, durch welche der eine Theil ein Uebergewicht über den andren erhielt. Der eine Theil fand sein Interesse in der Erhaltung und Ausdehnung des einmal Eingeführten oder Bestehenden, während der andre die Irrthümer erkannte und eine Aenderung erstrebte. So war der Krieg erklärt. Während die Wahrheit auf der Straße ihr Recht suchte, baute der herrschende Irrthum in seinen Schutzmauern auf dem einmal gelegten Fundament weiter und je mehr er sein Gebäude bedroht sah, desto mehr suchte er es zu befestigen. Daß auch er nach und nach die Wahrheit erkennen lernte, bewog ihn nicht, die durch ihr Gegentheil schon erlangten Vortheile aufzugeben, sondern er suchte sie sich jetzt systematisch zu sichern. Gewaltherrschaft, ungerechte Gesetze, religiöse Zähmungskünste und widernatürliche Erziehung waren die Mittel. So

wurde der herrschende Irrthum zur herrschenden Lüge, die herrschende Lüge erzeugte die beherrschte und diese als Noth-Lüge wurde sehr bald auch zur Gewohnheitslüge. Die ganze Gesellschaft verwickelte sich in ein Netz von Rücksichten, von Zwang, von Abhängigkeit, in welchem jedes natürliche Recht hingen blieb und welches nur zerrissen werden konnte durch das Verbrechen oder durch die Revolution. In einem Gemeinwesen ohne Religion, ohne Gewaltherrschaft, ohne die Hindernisse einer sozialen Gleichheit, ohne naturwidrige Erziehung ist so wenig Lüge denkbar, wie unter einer Fürsten- und Pfaffenherrschaft Wahrheit denkbar ist. Die Gesellschaft liegt, heißt: die Gesellschaft ist durch Religionszwang, Despotismus, Noth, Ungleichheit der Rechte und falsche Erziehung in einen unnatürlichen oder verunstwidrigen Zustand gerathen, in welchem ihre Mitglieder einen gewaltsamen Krieg Aller gegen Alle durch einen Krieg der List und Lüge, Verstellung und Heuchelei ersezten. Sowohl wer Unrecht leidet, ohne sich desselben erwehren zu können, wie wer Unrecht thut, ohne es aufzugeben zu wollen, muß Heuchelei und Lüge üben. Der Sklave muß so gut lügen wie der Despot, der Bettler so gut wie der Nabob. Das Unrecht wird zur Mutter der Lüge, wie die Lüge zur Mutter des Unrechts wurde, und so pflanzen sich beide mit einander fort von Generation zu Generation.

In derselben Weise aber, wie das Unrecht mit der Lüge, ist das Recht mit der Wahrheit verknüpft. Das Recht ist nichts Andres, als verwirklichte Wahrheit, wie das Unrecht nichts Andres ist, als verwirklichte Lüge. Diese Verknüpfung macht es sofort erklärlich, daß es der Wahrheit, auch wenn sie als solche anerkannt ist, so schwer wird, das

wirkliche Leben umzugestalten. Die bestehenden Zustände, die herrschenden Interessen, die hergebrachten Institutionen stehen ihr als mächtiges Hinderniß noch im Wege, selbst wenn die Lüge, aus welcher diese Zustände hervorgegangen, geistig schon überwunden ist. Deshalb ist ohne Aenderung der Zustände so wenig an eine Herrschaft der Wahrheit, wie ohne Verbreitung der Wahrheit an eine Aenderung der Zustände zu denken. Allgemein wahr werden die Menschen nur werden, wenn allgemeine Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit herrscht, und allgemeine Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit wird nur herrschen, wenn die Wahrheit allgemein erkannt ist. Diese glückliche Zeit werden wir nicht erleben und wahrscheinlich wird sie Niemand erleben. Aber annäherungsweise muß dies Ideal zu erreichen sein. Die Zivilisation muß durch die Sonnenferne der Lüge zur Sonnennähe der natürlichen Wahrheit zurückkehren. In wie fern wir persönlich zu einem solchen Resultat entscheidend mitwirken können, das darf nicht unsre allein bestimmende Rücksicht sein. Die Rettung der edleren menschlichen Natur und die Behauptung unserer eigenen Menschen-Ehre sind hinreichende Gründe, uns die furchtlose Erforschung und Geltendmachung der Wahrheit zur höchsten und schönsten Aufgabe zu machen, die Lüge aber bis auf den Tod zu bekämpfen. Seien wir misstrauisch gegen den Schein, nachsichtig gegen den Irrthum, aber unerbittlich gegen die Lüge. Es gibt für einen Menschen von Intelligenz, Ehre und Selbstgefühl kein unerträglicheres, unglücklicheres und schmachvolleres Loos, als das alltägliche: aus Furcht vor Andern seine Natur zu entstellen und seine Gedanken zu verheimlichen, seine Gefühle zu verbergen und seine Ueberzeugungen zu verschweigen,

seine Liebe zu verleugnen und seinen Haß zu unterdrücken, sogar als Sklave fremder Feigheit das eigene Selbst in den Raum zu thun und als lebendige Lüge durch die Welt zu gehn. Dagegen gibt es kein stärkeres und erhebenderes Bewußtsein, als das, offen und frei Alles ausgesprochen und gethan zu haben, was als Wunsch oder Widerstreben, Gefühl oder Gedanke, Sympathie oder Antipathie unser Inneres bewegt und die Prüfung unserer Vernunft besteht. Nur die Wahrheit macht frei, nur die Wahrheit macht glücklich und Reiner hat ein besseres Gewissen, als Derjenige, der „nichts mehr auf dem Gewissen“ hat.

Leicester, N. H.

4

SCRAP BOOK.

By

William Watkinson, Esq.

“The human mind is given to man, to exercise itself freely within the range of its capacities, and it best fulfills the purposes of its creation, when it thoroughly searches every field of inquiry.”

Reading, Pa.:

OWEN'S STEAM-PRESS, 515 COURT STREET.

1867.

SCRAP BOOK.

By
William Muhlenburg Frister.

“The human mind is given to man, to exercise itself freely within the range of its capacities, and it best fulfills the purposes of its creation, when it thoroughly searches every field of inquiry.”

Reading, Pa.:
OWEN'S STEAM-PRESS, 515 COURT STREET.
1867.

1870, Nov. 9.

Gift of
Rev. E. H. Downing,
of Galena, Ill.

IN the course of my reading, during the last two or three years, I transcribed passages expressing thoughts, that, at the time, approved themselves to my nature and reason as true and useful.

I put them into print, as they appear in my Scrap Book, without any attempt at arrangement, that they may be accessible in a more convenient and permanent form. They contain just as much truth and good for the reader, as each one can perceive and appropriate.

I have affixed the name of the author to many of the extracts, not as AUTHORITY, but as an index to channels of information, which inquiring minds will need to seek.

W. M. H.

SCRAP BOOK.

EVERY individual must make his own soul the standard of authority in determining what is true or false in principle or right or wrong in action. If we desire to do right, if our motives are approved by the highest convictions of the soul, although we may err in judgment and run into trouble, we shall never fall under self condemnation. The God within us shall bring us into judgment, and if we stand acquitted before the inward tribunal, no other "judgment seat" shall have power over the happiness and destiny of the soul.

ONE adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists,—one only; an assured belief
That the processes of our fate how'e'er
Sad or disturbed, are ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.

Wordsworth.

WHENEVER we learn a new truth or strengthen our affections for what is good and pure in any object, we are feeding our souls with that which shall endure forever.

FAITH is even more than is described in the definition of Paul. It is the conscious reliance of the soul upon a Power in itself perfect, that makes it supreme over all pains and temptations, when it has attained to a firm religious conviction.

THERE is nothing so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is, by the very law of its creation, in eternal progress; and the cause of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption, that our business is to preserve and not to improve. It is the ruin of all alike—individuals, schools and nations.

Dr. Arnold.

I WOULD say to all who cherish the associations that gather around the offices and duties of sectarian religion, stay in the church just as long as the church does you good. When you outgrow the relation, change your position and give to free thought and humanity the benefit of your growth and emancipation.

WE are each of us inspired according to our capacity and desire; and when we think this inspiration is nothing to us, and that we can as well do without it, we are unconsciously trifling with the most priceless treasure which it is ever given to human beings to enjoy. No we cannot do without this inspiration of God.

MY abhorrence of conservatism is not because it checks liberty,—in an established democracy it would favor liberty,—but because it checks the growth of mankind in wisdom, goodness and happiness, by straining to maintain institutions which are of necessity temporary, and thus never hindering change, but often depriving the change of half its value.

Dr. Arnold.

PROGRESS is inevitable, but on human effort depends its speedy attainment.

REPENTANCE of sin is progression out of sin.

ALL the holy attributes of God are implanted in the spirit of man ; these will work out the will of their Creator, when not prevented by the individuality of the possessor. By the perverseness of man,—by his outer education, they are often kept as it were in a state of idleness, but they ever live, and will eventually overrule all his actions.

INSTEAD of investigating and obeying the moral laws of our nature, the violation of which causes all the in-harmony, the inequality in social condition, and the consequent suffering with which earth is overflowing, men have been busy in the endeavor to discover or invent and propagate systems of religion, by which they hope to escape, in a future life, the consequences of a violation of the Creator's laws in this.

Geo. Combe.

IF your conception seems to you most consistent with the nature of our Father in Heaven and the tenor of His word,—if it gives you joy and peace in believing, restrains you from evil, impels you to good, sustains you in adversity, and comforts you in sorrow,—far be it from me to seek its displacement. I would make no proselyte to any theological opinion I hold, unless I hoped thereby to make him two fold more the child of heaven than he previously was.

INDIVIDUAL investigation and experience can alone determine for each individual what spiritualism is, in its deepest, divinest essence, when applied to the mind, the heart and life. It can no more become embodied in a creed, form or church, than can the air or the sunlight of heaven.

LOOK not mournfully into the past,—it comes not back again ; wisely improve the present,—it is thine ; go forth and meet the dim and shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart.

CONSCIENCE in the general or rather in the idealogical sense of the word means the knowledge which each man has of his own acts. Thus we say that the soul is conscious of its thoughts, of the acts of its will, and of its sensations ; so that the word conscience taken in this sense expresses a perception of what we do and feel. Applied to the moral order, this word signifies the judgments which we ourselves form of our actions as good or evil. Thus when we are about to perform an action, conscience points it out to be as good or bad, and consequently lawful or unlawful ; and it thus directs our conduct. The action being performed, it tells us whether we have done well or ill, it excuses or condemns, it rewards us with peace of mind, or punishes us with remorse. Public conscience is nothing but the judgment formed of their actions by the generality of men. It results from this that, like private conscience, the public conscience may be right or wrong, strict or relaxed ; and that there must be differences on this point among societies of men, the same as there are among individuals, that is to say, that, as in the same society, we find men whose consciences are more or less right or wrong, more or less strict or relaxed, we must also find societies superior to others, in the justice of the judgments which they form on actions, and in the delicacy of their moral appreciation.

Balme.

By the supernatural is meant, the operation of those higher and more recondite laws of God, with which, being yet but most superficially acquainted, we either denominate their effects miraculous, or, shutting our eyes firmly, deny their existence altogether.

William Howitt.

NEITHER in this life nor in the life to come can I hope a forgiveness of any sin not repented of ; and no sin is repented of, the habit of which is not changed.

As the soul is large by nature and education, so large can its inspiration be. Perfect inspiration could be received only by perfect beings fulfilling absolutely all the laws of mind and morals. In man there must always remain somewhat merely human, personal, fallible. The light which comes pure from the Sun of Truth is refracted as it enters the atmosphere of our thoughts, and receives from it colors of all kinds; doubly refracted, when it is reproduced in human language. There is somewhat of divine and somewhat of human, in the noblest thoughts and words of man. As God aids him morally by His grace, and yet never makes him impeccable; so He aids him intellectually by inspiration, yet never makes him infallible.

Frances Cobbe.

IN discussing questions wherein actual demonstration cannot be had, analogy is the next best criterion, and all rational persons are bound to receive that theory which presents the fewest rational objections, and most in keeping with analogy.

When knowledge is obviously incomplete, belief should be provisional, and judgment trained to hold itself in the prudent suspense of philosophic doubt.

THE virtue of an act consists in its being in harmony with the dictates of all the faculties acting in harmonious combination and duly enlightened. The dictates of the animal, moral and intellectual powers, which constitute rules of conduct are the collective dictates of the best endowed and best balanced minds, illuminated by the greatest knowledge.

GEO. COMBE.

VIRTUE consists in doing our duty in the several relations that we sustain in respect to ourselves, and to our fellow men, and to God, as known from our reason, conscience and revelation.

THERE is nothing worse for man than uncertainty and indecision ; nothing that weakens, and tends more to make him useless. Indecision is to the will, what skepticism is to the mind. Give a man a definite object, and if he will devote himself to it, he will attain it. Let him hesitate between two different ways without a fixed rule to guide his conduct ; let him not know whither he is going ; let him be ignorant of his intentions, and you will find his energy relax, and his strength diminish, and he will stop.

Do you know by what secret great minds govern the world ? Do you know what renders them capable of heroic action ? And how all those who surround them are rendered so ? It is that they have a fixed object both for themselves and for others ; it is that they see that object clearly, desire it ardently, strive after it directly, with firm hope and lively faith, without showing any hesitation in themselves or others. Unity of thought and fixity of plan gives superiority over other men.

Balme.

I MUST cease to believe in human nature ere I can cease to believe in prayer. There is not on earth a more unnatural man than the prayerless man. Want, fear and love urge men as naturally to the Heavenly Parent, as they do children to the earthly parent. Emphatically and beautifully natural was Cornelius who "prayed to God always." There is nothing in the bringing about of which men have or can have an agency for which they should not at all times be ready to pray.

Prayer for or against rain is as irrational as would be prayer for or against an eclipse. Prayer for a safe voyage is rational. It is among other things prayer for self possession, wisdom, skill on the part of the navigator.

Gerrit Smith.

PRAYER for spiritual blessings is no self-acting delusion. It is a real drawing nigh of the soul to God. There is "One who heareth prayer," and Who is ever near us waiting to hear and bless it. The relation between the creature and the Creator, unconscious in the material part, and at best a dim sympathy in the intellectual love of truth and the æsthetic sense of beauty, becomes conscious and vivid in the moral and spiritual, when the will of man bends itself freely before the will of God, and the finite and infinite spirits meet in the awful communion of intense prayer. It is the most sacred of all mysteries, the most solemn thing in all man's life, the greatest reality of his existence. The help and light to be gained through such prayer is a natural thing, not a miraculous one. We do not ask God to change his laws, but to fulfill them. It is the law of spirit, that as we draw to Him, so He draws to us. The magnetic bar which has lost its power, regains it when we bring it in the plane of the meridian. The plant which was sickly, weak, and white, growing in the shade, acquires health and verdure in the sunshine. If we bring our pale, faded souls within the rays of God's warmth, we may say with confidence "Heal us, O Father, for we know it is thy will."

Frances Cobbe.

SKEPTICISM is the first step in the world's progress from a blind and false to an intelligent and true faith.

Fear and wonder are the chief elements of superstition. These are supplied by ignorance. Courage and composure come of knowledge and grow with it.

Reason and knowledge are as modest and hesitating as superstition and ignorance are conceited and dogmatizing. Reason and knowledge are conscious of their fallible workings; and, therefore, do they tolerate differences of opinion. They inspire diffidence as much as ignorance does positiveness.

Gerrit Smith.

CHARITY does not solely apply to the giving of alms, to the bestowal of food and shelter, to the clothing of the naked, and the feeding of the hungry. The mission of benevolence is world-wide, and its foundations are laid at home ; there it builds its loveliest altar, and plants its imperishable flowers. The heart-politeness that beautifies the homeliest wayside cot, that renders the plainest face attractive, and the homeliest fare inviting, springs from true benevolence. The self-denial that accepts of inconveniences and even privations for the sake of another's comfort, rises from the same source of love. The sunshine of the heart, desirous of always blessing its fellows, is revealed in the smile, the glance, the merry speech, the aura of goodness that environs those who so truly love their kind. Our Father's " mute creation " is included in the list of grateful recipients. It has an inexhaustible store of loving kindness for all that lives. Its forgiveness and forgetfulness of injuries is complete. Its prayer is thanksgiving. Its aim of life is harmony.

WHEVER withholds from another that which is needed for his good and happiness, and is not needed by himself, detracts from his own ultimate happiness to the extent that he might have benefitted his neighbor. This is immutable spiritual law, and by it we must every one of us come to judgment sooner or later. The old idea of making sacrifices that future reward may come is false. Man is not entitled to any credit for benevolence, and, therefore, can receive no reward. He is made happy by doing good as an inherent law, and vice versa ; and the result in either case is alike certain.

PHILOSOPHERS in investigating matter, its attributes and laws, are limited by the range of the senses. When it becomes too attenuated to reveal itself, they complacently call it spirit, and assign it a confused and contradictory existence.

SPIRITUALISM is based on the cardinal fact of spirit-communion and influx ; it is the effort to discover all truth relating to man's spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare and destiny, and its application to a regenerate life. It recognizes a continuous Divine inspiration in man ; it aims, through a careful, reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe ; of the relations of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the spiritual world. It is thus catholic and progressive, leading to the true religion as at one with the highest philosophy.

THERE are hells of various degrees. Some dark and cavernous, bleak and barren of life ; others burning with perpetual fires, peopled with terrific ghostly forms. Selfish lives are destined to know the silent horrors of the first ; the guilty perpetrators of great wrongs are doomed to the second. Not by any arbitrary decree of God, but by inherent, Divine fixed law. For ourselves, by every thought and word and act, we prepare for the future joy or misery, and as the inward condition, so will be the corresponding outward surrounding of the spirit divested of mortality.

IN matters of theology, the universal touchstone, the all-sufficient test of character is belief, than which nothing can be more superficial, seeing there are a thousand things constantly occurring, the tendency of which is to modify our belief.

Belief strictly as such of any kind, or in anything, rests upon certain evidence, and the law regulating this evidence is particular and exacting. We cannot believe what, when and where we simply wish. Belief is not the result of a mere act or volition of the will, but something which comes to us naturally and slowly through the educational processes of all the faculties.

RELIGION is neither a system nor a science. It is our heart's recognition of our relations and obligations. It is simply fidelity to our nature. The religion of human nature is harmony not only with human nature, but with all nature and with God. For every part of nature is harmonious with every other part of it, and all nature is in harmony with the Author of all nature.

Gerrit Smith.

SPIRITUALISM recognizes the doctrine of individual liberty and responsibility; the duty of individual regeneration in conformity to physical and spiritual laws; the self retributive elements of wrong; the self recompense of the right; the necessity of practicing love, purity, justice and humanity in the attainment of harmony, happiness or heaven, either in the present or future life; and the right and duty of every man to seek all the light he needs as his guide, and settle for himself all matters between his own conscience and God.

By self-denial, overcoming of the purely animal propensities, by rigid adherence to truth, by a righteous love of liberty, by charity and full forgiveness of injuries, we may reach the pearly gate that leads into the summer lands of peace, even while the striving spirit is yet encased in its mortal tenement. We can become the disciples of wisdom—the pupils of the angels even here.

NATURAL justice towards God and man, so earnest and entire as to fill the heart and life with its presence and power,—this and this alone is the essence and the all of the Christ religion. Think not I look for such justice where the Divine Spirit is not at work to produce it. In order to attain to it, depraved man—man who has run away from his nature—must be “born again.”

Gerrit Smith.

NATURE has a high and pure purpose. If her purpose was simply to make a fish, she would fail. If she had not a purpose far above and beyond all fishes, reptiles, birds, marsupials and mammalia,—a purpose to which those organized forms of life were subservient, of which they are but parts and fragments,—she would fail utterly in all her labors.

To individualize the immortal human spirit, and to make for it a garment,—an enveloping soul,—after the fashion of the physical body, which shall withstand the revolutions of eternity and always be young and beautiful to look upon,—this is the high purpose, the pure design, which consecrates all the labors of nature, and lifts the whole system into a divine and glorious significance.

A. J. Davis.

SCIENCE is a knowledge of facts and forces. Art is the intellectual and manual power to control such forces for the gratification and benefit of mankind. There is a plain difference between Art and Science. The latter is the embodiment of intellectual discoveries ; the former is the archangel which puts theory into practice, for the world's permanent good.

THE ideality of mankind in every age has always transcended the so-called reality. It represents the shadows of coming events, the reality of the future. Mankind has an idea of what constitutes true virtue, true benevolence, true morality, true mercy. But take mankind collectively or individually, and there is no such thing as true virtue, true benevolence, true morality, true justice or true mercy. There is no nation, no race, no man or woman but is susceptible of improvement or of being improved upon. Mankind is looking upward and ahead, his ideality is ever busy speculating upon what ought to be, what can be, and what inevitably must be.

THERE cometh to every man, either here or hereafter, a sacred hour, when the life which has been selfish and personal, becomes general, fraternal, universal. Oh who shall describe the ecstacies of the new birth. The world seems transfigured ; every object has a new significance, and seems swimming in glory. Music is more musical—beauty is more beautiful—and all things are instinct with God. The human faces that we had passed unnoticed a thousand times, seem to have grown suddenly sweet and sacred, and all life becomes invested with a holy charm. Your bosom warms with unutterable love, and you touch the fountains of Infinite power at every pulse of the heart. Then for the first time you realize fully the sacred meaning of Fraternity, and feel yourself therefore the true child of Infinite love. Our career then straitens itself in courses parallel to the Divine laws. Before that hour comes, the first object is self; after that has come, the great aim is beneficence to others. Constancy to the Divine work is the only true happiness. Men can never catch happiness while seeking it. It is only when we forget to seek it, and yearn to bestow it, that it comes to us. God will come when we are ready for the Divine presence.

As viewed by theology, the sin against the Holy Ghost is utterly inexplicable ; but as the Holy Ghost may be taken to mean the influence of the consciousness of any holy presence upon the individual, the sin against the Holy Ghost must be a sin against man's highest perception of what is holy and true, and it can never be forgiven, because the sinner must reap all its consequences.

I ABANDON logic and adopt nature, which teaches me that man has an intuitive and immediate power of judging ideas, and their relations, by their harmony or discord with his own innate sense of the true and the just, and the beautiful.

I HAVE had frequent occasion to assert that the tendency of the doctrine of Spiritualism was to the most exalted private worth and public virtue. I have challenged contradiction—I repeat the challenge—and I know that every candid mind must answer in the sentiments, if not in the language, of the late Chancellor of South Carolina. “The teachings in your publications, as emanating from the spirits, inculcate a morality the most pure and elevated, and a state of the affections towards God, in the highest degree holy and spiritual. In these respects there are, in my opinion, no writings extant more unexceptionable.”

J. W. Edmonds.

ASPIRATION, which is of the spirit, and leads towards the impersonal and infinite, is too often superseded by ambition, which springs from personality, and ends in selfishness. The aims of ambition are finite, and its results transitory. It leads its votaries farther and farther from the simplicity of honesty and the beauty of holiness, and wraps them about with fold upon fold of error and duplicity; whereas that childlike seeking for the highest good, irrespective of self-interest, which we denominate aspiration, unlocks the gateway to the temple of truth, wherein abide love, wisdom, and supernal happiness.

WHEN will men learn that Christianity consists not in saying “Lord, Lord,” but in doing the Father’s will; not in believing a creed, but in living a true life; not in opinion but in character, not in dogmas but in duty, not in understanding the ontology of Christ, but in possessing his spirit. When will men see the broad distinction between theology and religion?

IT is not fame, but consciousness of high aims and inward strength, that lights the path of the honest seeker of truth.

THERE is almost always a subduing, refining and spiritualizing influence emanating from the seeming evils of physical affliction. Under the silent influence of many diseases, the material temple is made, as it were, to crumble and fall piece by piece to the earth ; but under the same quiet influence the indwelling spirit,—the immortal mind,—untolds its delicate and youthful proportions, day by day, and hour by hour, until it is prepared to tread the sunny paths, to inhale the fragrant odors, and to associate with the radiant inhabitants of the superior country. Disease is a strange and unnatural process by which to subdue and purify, and bring the soul into conjunction with the superior and eternal ; but it is a revolutionizing ordeal, and, in this sense, should ever be regarded as a blessing, and sustained with patience and composure.

A. J. Davis.

THE laws of nature, which are God's thoughts, never cease to guide, protect and exercise justice ; hence it is that though we are often admonished and then chastized by intense suffering for disobeying the laws of life, our afflictions work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

THE most subtle powers of reasoning cannot produce happiness. Happiness groweth from internal feeling, from affinity for the pure, the holy, and the good. Happiness cometh from trusting love. He who hath confidence in God's goodness is happy. He who hath confidence that his own existence is and will be eternal must feel perfect joy.

LET tranquility reign throughout the chambers of the dying ; but when the body is cold, and when the immortal soul is gone, then calmly rejoice and sweetly sing, and be exceeding glad ; for, when a body dies on earth, a soul is born in heaven.

MAN at the core of his being, naturally loves good, and cannot be reconciled to evil. Depravity is an abnormal state, either of body or mind, which generates unrighteous propensities. Its essence is a conscious love of wrong,—some inordinate wish against want,—a preternatural craving for something which is known to be opposed to the harmony of human interests, as in the case of a miser, who for sheer love of money grieves to spend what is needful for his welfare. As health is the natural state of the body and disease an unnatural state, as sanity is the natural and insanity an unnatural state of the mind, so benevolence, probity and chastity are natural, and malevolence, improbity and unchastity unnatural. These and all other species of mental and physical depravity originate in ignorance and error.

THE earth is good unto the pure in spirit. Do not think that God's immense power can overcome the immensity of His love. His creations, from the atom unto the wildest comet, are each and every one turning out order, harmony and happiness before thee, all for thee, and thee only, oh man, for God cannot be rendered happy therewith.

MUCH is due to birth; much to breeding; how much to self? I doubt not many go out of brothels and jails, and from the gallows, with more merit than I have, and will take a higher place at last in heaven; for they have better borne their birthright and breeding than I have mine.

Theodore Parker.

MAY you be faithful to your own souls; and the Infinite Perfection, the Cause and Providence of all that is, the Absolute Love, transcending the time and space it fills, Our Father and our Mother will bless each of you beyond your prayer forever and forever.

Theodore Parker.

OF THE PARTY THAT ARE NEITHER CATHOLICS NOR PROTESTANTS.—This party has an idea wider and deeper than that of the Catholic or Protestant, namely: That God still inspires men as much as ever; that He is immanent in spirit as in space. For the present purpose, and to avoid circumlocution, that doctrine may be called SPIRITUATISM. This relies on no church, tradition or scripture as the last ground and infallible rule; it counts these things teachers, if they teach, not masters; helps, if they help us, not authorities. It relies on the Divine presence in the soul of man; the eternal word of God, which is truth, as it speaks through the faculties He has given. It believes God is near the soul as matter to the sense; thinks the canon of revelation not yet closed, nor God exhausted. It sees Him in Nature's perfect work; hears Him in all true scripture, Jewish or Phœnician; feels Him in the aspiration of the heart; stoops at the same fountain with Moses and Jesus, and is filled with living water. It calls God Father, not King; Christ Brother, not Redeemer; heaven home; religion nature. It loves and trusts, but does not fear. It sees in Jesus a man living man-like, highly gifted, and living with blameless and beautiful fidelity to God, stepping thousands of years before the race of men; the profoundest religious genius God has raised up, whose works and words help us to form and develop the native idea of a complete religious man. It is no personal Christ, but the spirit of wisdom, holiness, love, that creates the well-being of man; a life at one with God. The divine incarnation is in all mankind.

Spiritualism lays down no creed; asks no symbol; reverences exclusively no time nor place. It reckens forms useful to such as they help; one may commune with God, through the bread and wine emblems of the body that was broke, and the blood that was shed in the cause of truth; another may hold communion through the moss and the violet, the mountain, the ocean, or

the scripture of suns which God has writ in the sky ; it does not make the means the end ; it prizes the signification more than the sign. It knows nothing of that puerile distinction between Reason and Revelation, never finds the alleged contradiction between good sense and Religion. Its temple is all space ; its shrine the pure heart ; its creed all truth ; its ritual works of love and utility ; its profession of faith a Divine life, works without, faith within, love of God and man.

Theodore Parker.

LOOKING at the actual state of knowledge, Burke was forced to admit, that all political principles have been raised by hasty induction from limited facts ; and that, therefore, it is the part of a wise man, when he adds to the facts, to revise the induction, and, instead of sacrificing practice to principles, modify the principles, that he may change the practice. Or, to put this in another way, he lays it down, that political principles are at the best the product of human reason ; while political practice has to do with human nature and human passions, of which reason forms but a part ; and that, on this account, the proper business of a statesman is to contrive the means by which certain ends may be effected, leaving it to the general voice of the country to determine what those ends shall be, and shaping his own conduct, not according to his own principles, but according to the wishes of the people for whom he legislates, and whom he is bound to obey.

Buckle.

EACH one's progress is through a succession of teachers, each of whom seems, at the time, to have superlative influence, but it at last gives place to a new.

I HAVE done wrong things enough in my life, and do them now, but I am not conscious of hating God, or man, or right, or love.

Theodore Parker.

As a man becomes a saint in proportion as he receives the revelation of goodness to his conscience, and reproduces it in his life—as he becomes a philosopher in proportion as he receives the revelation of truth to his intellect, and produces it in science—so, likewise, he becomes a poet in proportion as he receives the revelation of beauty to his aesthetic nature, and reproduces it in art. Just in so far and no farther, than as a man has partaken most deeply of that spirit of God revealed in the beauty of nature, just so far and no farther are his works high and true poetry.

Frances Cobbe.

THERE are days in which men feel that the abundance of the things which they possess does not constitute their life; in which they have a sense of their manhood, and of that inward development, that soul growth, which is to go on with them forever and forever in the eternal sphere. There are days in which men feel that they are indeed the uncrowned sons of God walking yet in disguise. We are not what we seem.

H. W. Beecher.

CONSCIENCE is the last appeal. Never go beyond that; even if it says wrong, the man is degraded who disobeys it. But if a man's conscience tells him something different from other men's, he is not to forego it, but to recast his plans, examine the subject anew, but at last adhere to conscience.

Theodore Parker.

THERE is no more perilous ordeal through which man can pass,—no greater curse which can be imposed on him, as he is at present constituted,—than that of being condemned to walk his life long in the sunlight of unshaded prosperity.

Pascal.

WE must seek the Divine level, if we would be blessed with the Divine presence.

IT is the effectual, fervent work of a righteous man that availeth much—his head work and hand work. Gossiping before God—tattling mere words, asking Him to do my duty—that is not prayer. I also believe in prayer from the innermost of my heart, else must I renounce my manhood and the Godhead above and about me. I also believe in prayer. It is the up-springing of my soul to meet the Eternal, and thereby I seek to alter and improve myself, not Thee, O Thou Unchangeable, who art perfect from the beginning. Then I mingle my soul with the Infinite Presence. I am ashamed of my wickedness, my cowardice, sloth, fear. New strength comes into me of its own accord, as the sunlight to these flowers which open their little cups. Then I find that he that goeth forth even weeping, bearing this precious aid of prayer, shall, doubtless, come again rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him.

Theodore Parker.

WITH me a religious man is simply a just man. Show me a just man, and you show me a religious one. The more just he is the more religious he is, and when, under the new creating influences of Heaven, he has reached the sublime height of doing in all things as he would be done by, then has he fulfilled the claims of justice and religion, of the Bible and reason, of earth and heaven.

The best and the worst men are orthodox; and the best and the worst men are heterodox. Practical religion only—lived out goodness only—that alone is the test; that alone puts all the good on one side, and all the bad on the other.

Gerrit Smith.

To spend the concluding period of human existence, in the pursuit of wealth and power and fame, does not accord with any just conception of the responsibilities of life.

I FOUND certain great primal intuitions of human nature which depend on no logical process of demonstration, but are rather facts of consciousness given by the instinctive action of human nature itself. I will mention only the three most important which pertain to religion :

The instinctive intuition of the Divine, the consciousness that there is a God.

The instinctive intuition of the just and right, a consciousness that there is a moral law, independent of our will, which we ought to keep.

The instinctive intuition of the immortal, a consciousness that the essential element of man, the principle of individuality, never dies.

Here, then, was the foundation of religion laid in human nature itself, which neither the atheist nor the more pernicious bigot, with their sophisms of denial or affirmation could move or even shake.

Theodore Parker.

MAN is to be measured by that which makes him man, in distinction from every thing else ; and that is not foot, nor hand, nor body, nor appetites, nor passions, nor economic or commercial power. These are not the things that make the man. It is that which has been stamped on him—God's image—that makes him man among the creatures of the world. That part of his nature which introduces the moral element, right and wrong ; the spiritual element, invisible realities ; and the benevolent element—the very divinity of love. Here man must be measured ; for here and here only, he becomes man, among the creatures of the world.

H. W. Beecher.

MAN is responsible for his own motives of action according to his own development ; and that is the only standard by which he can be judged. He cannot be made responsible for his development.

THOSE who advance the plea of utility in behalf of mathematics and physical science as the preferable studies to literature, in public schools, seem to forget that the world in which we live consists quite as much of the men and women on its surface, as of the earth and its constituent materials. If any man were to analyze his own life, he would find he had far more to do with his fellow men than with any thing else. And if, therefore, we are to choose a study which shall pre-eminently fit a man for life, it will be that which shall best enable him to enter into the thoughts, the feelings and the motives of his fellow man.

If the staple of education is to be found in the different branches of literature, the classics, in a perfect system, must be the substratum.

The real defect of mathematics and physical science as instruments of education is, that they have not any tendency to humanize. Such studies do not make a man more human, but simply more intelligent. The fact is that all education really comes from intercourse with other minds.

Dr. Temple.

MAN is so constituted, that by merely telling him he is a fool, he will at length believe it, and, if he tells himself so, he will constrain himself to believe it. For man holds an internal intercourse with himself, which ought to be well regulated, since even here "evil communications corrupt good manners."

Pascal.

If you love others, they will love you. If you speak kindly of them, they will speak kindly of you. Love is repaid with love, and hatred with hatred. Would you hear a sweet and pleasant echo, speak sweetly and pleasantly yourself.

No man ever dies, when it is a misfortune to him.

THE classic life contains precisely the true corrective for the chief defects of modern life. The classic writers exhibit precisely that cordon of virtues in which we are apt to be deficient. They altogether show human nature on a grander scale, with less benevolence, but more patriotism ; less sentiment, but more self-control ; if a lower average of virtue, more striking examples of it ; fewer small goodnesses, but more greatness, and appreciation of greatness ; more which tends to exalt the imagination, and inspire high conceptions of the capabilities of human nature. It, as every one must see, the want of affinity of these studies to the modern mind is gradually lowering them in popular estimation, this is but a confirmation of the need of them, and renders it more incumbent on those who have the power, to do their utmost to aid in preventing their decline.

Dr. Temple.

THEOLOGY places God and the means of salvation away from the individual ; but spiritualism teaches that every soul, (led by the Spirit,) must save itself,—that as we improve and progress we become more and more Godlike.

GOD builded the creation by the agency of His own pure attributes, yet He is not the creation, nor is it an embodiment of Him. As man remaineth separate and distinct from his building, so God doth remain independent of His creation.

CATHOLICISM will believe in the ascension of the spirit after death, in the communion of saints, and in the forgiveness of sins. We will believe in the ascension of the spirit after death, in the communion of sinners as well as saints, and that sin is never forgiven, but only outgrown as much in the next as in this world.

A. J. Davis.

THOSE who are esteemed umpires of taste are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures or sculpture, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant ; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual. Their cultivation is local, as if you should rub a log of dry wood in one spot to produce fire, all the rest remaining cold. Their knowledge of the fine arts is some study of rules and particulars, or some limited judgment of color or form, which is exercised for amusement or for show.

R. W. Emerson.

ONCE convince a man thoroughly, that thousands of spiritual eyes, and above all, a Supreme Eye, can take cognizance of his every thought and act; convince him that the good and tender and true among the departed of all ages—that the good and tender and true among his own kindred and friends, who have crossed the dark river, have it in their power to scan his conduct and his motives, and will not the constant, the hourly prayer of that man's heart be “Cleanse Thou me from all secret sins.”

INSTEAD of asking who was a man's father, the question became, how much he had got. And, certainly, if either question is to be put, the latter is the more rational. Wealth is a real and substantial thing, which ministers to our pleasures, increases our comforts, multiplies our resources, and, not unfrequently, alleviates our pains. But birth is a dream and a shadow, which, so far from benefiting either body or mind, only puffs up its possessor with an imaginary excellence, and teaches him to despise those whom nature has made his superiors.

OUR individual enjoyment is inseparably connected with and dependent on social welfare.

THE most enlightened scientific men of the present day exclude from the sphere of human knowledge all ideas of God and spirit. Whatever transcends the facts of sense, and the scope of the understanding is beyond the pale of legitimate inquiry. On this point, the philosophic theologian and the positive philosopher meet on common ground. Whoever would attain the knowledge of spiritual truths must follow the dictates of faith, must obey the law written in the heart, must fall back on the intuitions of the soul as the authentic source of Divine light.

THE best of men appear sometimes to be strange compounds of contradictory qualities ; and were the accidental oversights and folly of the wisest men—the failings and imperfections of a religious man—the hasty acts and passionate words of a meek man,—were they to rise up in judgment against them, and an ill-natured judge be suffered to mark, in this manner, what has been done amiss,—what character so unexceptionable as to be able to stand before him.

WHAT avarice in an old man can propose to itself I cannot conceive ; for can anything be more absurd than, in proportion as less of our journey remains, to seek a greater supply of provisions.

THE truth comes only to such as seek it with perfect simplicity and singleness of purpose. Only to such does God reveal himself.

PLEASURE is a shadow ; wealth is vanity ; and power is pageant ; but knowledge is ecstatic in enjoyment, perennial in fame, unlimited in space, and infinite in duration.

GUILT and innocence depend in each case on the enlightenment of the individual. But right and wrong are eternal, and to these the Almighty has attached by fixed laws certain consequences of good and evil.

SPIRITUALISM is the enemy of conformity. It teaches that it is better for a man to think for himself, even if he thinks wrongly, than to conform to the tyranny of social hypocrisies. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" to the individual. It is probable that "individualism" may also have its follies and fanaticisms. It may lead to isolation in some persons; in others, to selfish acts of pride and tyranny; and it may, for a period, set up a barrier to associative efforts for the progress of the multitude; but these errors will correct themselves, while the positive benefits of individualism will come out clearer, like the golden sun from behind the clouds.

A. J. Davis.

WE can hear with patience absurd doctrines and false theories preached, if he who utters them feels in his heart he is declaring the truth, but the man who measures his words by the popular ear, who feels his way timidly along, who declares just so much as shall best satisfy the selfish pride of his hearers, needs no anathemas—his soul has not yet grown so that it can take in a large idea.

REMEMBER how much is certain. Is there any doubt about the sermon on the mount? Whether for instance the beatitudes are true in fact? Whether the pure in heart shall see God? Any doubt whether to have the mind of Christ be salvation and rest? Well, if so, you may be content to leave much, if God will, to unfold itself slowly; if not, you can quietly wait for eternity to settle it.

F. W. Robertson.

MANY a Unitarian, as Channing, has adored, calling it only admiration; and many an orthodox Christian, calling Christ, God, with most accurate theology, has given Him only a cool intellectual homage.

F. W. Robertson.

As to the offices of religion, and the character those offices should assume in the case of incurable disease, it seems to me that the only legitimate function of religion in such cases is to soothe and cheer, to meet such wants as are expressed or well understood, and not to force the consideration of questions, which, unless they have been already considered, can hardly be considered with profit then. It sometimes happens, that well-intentioned, but mis-judging, friends of a different faith seek the presence of the dying, in order to draw their attention to points of sectarian theology, and to bring about a state of mind, which they suppose to be an essential condition of future blessedness. Let such visitations and ministrations by all means be excluded, as tending only to perplex and agitate a mind too enfeebled for discussion or resistance, with no likelihood of future and final gain. For of all the absurdities engendered by false views of God and man, there is none which exceeds the absurdity of supposing that the everlasting welfare of a human soul can depend on the presence of a certain idea in the mind a few moments before the pulsations of the animal frame have ceased. The future well-being, so far as it depends on moral conditions, must be the fruit of a life. Where the life has not produced this fruit, it is not likely to spring forth ripe and complete from the pressure exerted on the mind in the dying hour. No doubt the character may be permanently benefited by the experiences of the death-bed; but they must be natural experiences, wrought into the soul by the spirit of God, through the proper discipline of that season, and not forced experiences, produced by efforts from without, and the importunity of dogmatic presentations.

F. H. Hedge.

WE never labor hard to understand the thought of another, without at the same time developing our own power of thinking.

THE first point is the definition of salvation ; and in this particular there will be no room for cavil, because all religionists and moralists are agreed. It expresses what Mr. Brownson terms spiritual civilization,—that is “the submission of passion to reason, and of reason to the Divine law.” In other words, salvation expresses, not merely passion and brute instincts restrained, but passion and animal impulses subdued and made subservient to a spiritual control. It is the condition unfolded as the new covenant, in which God’s law is put into the mind and written upon the heart. This is spiritual civilization. It is salvation. It is Christianity realized in the individual soul. It is all this, whether man be in this world or in another. Change of locality is of no account, if the inward condition be not changed. This change of condition is in the scriptures symbolized as a new birth, or as being born from above.

Abel C. Thomas.

A FOOLISH consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency, a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself about his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day.—Ah, “so you will be sure to be misunderstood.”—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood ? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates and Jesus and Luther, and Capernicus and Galeleo and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

R. W. Emerson.

WHENEVER a man intuitively and intellectually triumphs over the idea that physical death is the end, there a spiritualist is born.

WE come, then, to the hypothesis, which supposes Providence to consist in the everywhere present, uniform and direct action of Deity; which supposes it to be the sum and substance of all these agencies, processes and laws which we call Nature, and by which the material universe moves and subsists. According to this theory, there is no power in nature, or in works of man's device, but God; no law but Divine volition; no process but Divine performance. Gravitation is one mode of Providence; magnetism another; electricity another. Providence is attraction and repulsion, cohesion and explosion, flood tide and ebb tide, sunrise and sunset, motion and rest. All the energies of nature are methods of Divine activity, and all the phenomena of nature are phases of the one eternal Presence. According to this view, whatever chances is willed,—the mischance as well as the looked for and desired result; the failure as well as the fulfilment, the disaster as well as the success, the foundered and unreturning vessel as well as the safe arrival, the earthquake which shatters a city as well as the sunrise which blesses a world; according to this view, the unlooked for escape is Providential; but equally Providential the loss and the death. Whatever chances is willed; and whatever is willed is right.

If any one object to this view, that in shunning the one extreme of a far-away, isolated God,—a God who dwells apart from His works in solitary self-sufficingness,—it runs to the opposite extreme of pantheism, I can only say, I have no desire to repel the plea. I accept the charge of pantheism, not in the cheerless, impious sense of a God all world, and a world instead of God, but in the true and primary sense of a world all God; a God co-present to all His works, pervading and embracing all; a God, in apostolic phrase, “in Whom and through Whom are all things.” If this is pantheism, it has ever been the doctrine of the deepest piety—it is the pantheism professed by devout men in

every age of the world. It is the pantheism of Berkeley when he speaks of "finite agents imbosomed in an Infinite Mind." It is the pantheism of Newton when he speaks of "a Being pervading space, Who, present to all things, sees and embraces all things present within Himself." It is the pantheism of David when he says "Thou hast beset me behind and before."—"If I ascend into heaven, behold ! Thou art there ; if I make my bed in the under world, behold ! Thou art there." It is the pantheism of Paul when he says, "In Him we live, and move and have our being."

F. H. Hedge.

IT is perhaps God's will that we should be taught in this our day, among other precious lessons, not to build up our faith upon a book, though it be the Bible itself; but to realize more truly the blessedness of knowing that He himself, the living God, our Father and Friend is nearer and closer to us than any book can be ; that His voice within the heart may be heard continually by the obedient child that listens for it ; and that that shall be our teacher and guide in the path of duty, which is the path of life, when all other helpers,—even the words of the best of books,—may fail us.

Colenso.

REVELATIONS open and enlighten the judgment, whilst inspirations excite, vivify and warm our spirits to action. Many persons are truly inspired, who have not common sense. In fact they may be very highly inspired and still be very much in the externals. On the other hand when a man has a real revelation,—which gently expands and opens the faculties of thought, and which also brings proportion and depth and solidity,—then inspiration becomes to that man's faculties, what sun heat is to the flowers and grains and grasses. It is a cause of growth and steady fertilization.

A. J. Davis.

PARTIAL or one-sided views of a great truth may lead well-meaning men into deplorable mistakes. While advanced minds may find in the great facts of spiritualism new confirmation of their belief in God and Christian morality, others may stop at a half-way house, where the mist has not yet so lifted, that they can clear themselves of certain spectral impressions, that take the shape of atheism, free love, the inefficacy of prayer. But we have no fear that the humble, the earnest and the pure in heart will not come out right at last—in their theology as well as in their morality ; for right acting is no inconsiderable step towards right thinking.

WE are right in speaking of special Providences, if we merely express our own feeling of their import to us, if it is understood that the speciality refers to our own personal experience and not to the will of God. When in any instance, we have experienced a signal felicity, and feel ourselves peculiarly blest, the devout mind is peculiarly impressed with a feeling of Providential care and love. To our gratitude, such blessing is a special Providence ; and we do well to emphasize it as such. At the same time, we ought to understand, that, as far as the Divine government is concerned, every event that befalls us is equally Providential. To suppose that some things are more so than others, is to charge God with a fitful and partial rule, instead of a uniform care and government over us.

F. H. Hedge.

THE condition of arriving at truth is not severe habits of investigation, but innocence of life, humbleness of heart. Truth is felt not reasoned out ; and, if there be any truths which are only appreciable by the acute understanding, we may be sure at once that these do not constitute the soul's life, nor error in these the soul's death.

F. W. Robertson.

THINK of death not as inevitable merely, but as something Divine ; a process of the Universal Love, a moment in the universal life. Here is nothing monstrous or out of the way ; no frightful anomaly, no dispensation of wrath ; but something of a piece with the setting sun and the waning moon and the falling leaf,—a part of the great order, a necessary link in the universal chain which binds all beings to the throne of God. A true religion will adjust itself with it,—will look upon it as it were upon the parting day and the dying year, with minds sobered and thoughtful indeed ; for all changes and all endings are sad, but not with horror and dread. Death is natural ; let us hold by that. The nearer we are to nature, the more fitting and beautiful and welcome it will seem.

F. H. Hedge.

To live by trust in God, to do and say the right, because it is lovely,—to dare to gaze on the splendor of the naked truth, without putting a false veil before it to terrify children and old women by mystery and vagueness,—to live by love and not by fear, that is the life of a true, brave man, who will take Christ and His mind for the Truth, instead of the clamor of either the worldly world, or the religious world.

F. W. Robertson.

THE mother's love is, at first, an absorbing delight, blunting all other sensibilities ; it is an expansion of the animal existence ; it enlarges the imagined range for self to move in ; but in after years it can only continue to be joy on the same terms as other long-lived love—that is, by much suppression of self, and power of living in the experience of another.

To be able to love one another is greatness itself. This law is the Christ principle, the Christ doctrine and the Christ life. It produces, comprehends and governs the universe of matter and of mind.

THE two main points of religion, are the submission of our mind to another and higher mind, and the requirement that each of our faculties makes this submission. We shall get a better idea of religion if we consider it a system of personal education ; it is not merely a system of truths, any more than navigation is the compass and the sextant. It is not either a mysterious effusion of the soul, a change of feeling as it is called ; this accompanies it and results from it. Yet the thing itself is something deeper than this ; it is really the formation of a new character, after the model set us in Christ. Religion is the thorough reconstruction of the character after that model.

H. W. Beecher.

TIME is but (to us) the succession of ideas, long or short, as they are few or many ; and eternity, as we use the word, means nothing more than the endlessness of this succession. The distinction made by religious people between eternity and time is an unthinking one. Eternity seems to me a word expressive of a negation ; it does but deny a termination to that mental state which we call time, for time is a subjective thing, existing, that is, in us, not externally to us,—a mode of our being.

F. W. Robertson.

THOUGH there may be, from time to time, more extraordinary manifestations of the influence of the spiritual world operating on the incarnate world, the principle is universal and belonging to all times and nations ; as essentially a part of God's economy in his education of the human race as the rising and setting of the sun.

William Howitt.

SIR Thomas Browne says,—Marshalling all the horrors of death, and contemplating the extremities thereof, I find not anything therein able to daunt the courage of a man, much less of a resolved Christian.

SCIENCE not having yet succeeded in discovering the laws of rain, men are at present unable to foretell it for any considerable period ; the inhabitant of the country is therefore driven to believe that it is the result of supernatural agency, and we still see the extraordinary spectacle of prayers offered up in our churches for dry weather or for wet weather ; a superstition which in future ages will appear as childish as the feelings of pious awe with which our fathers regarded the presence of a comet or the approach of an eclipse. We are now acquainted with the laws which determine the movements of comets and eclipses, and as we are able to predict their appearances, we have ceased to pray that we may be preserved from them. But because our researches into the phenomena of rain happen to have been less successful, we resort to the impious contrivance of calling in the aid of the Deity to supply those deficiencies in science, which are the result of our own sloth ; and we are not ashamed, in our public churches, to prostitute the rites of religion, by using them as a cloak to conceal an ignorance we ought frankly to confess.

Buckle

COMMON pursuits and amateurships are the first things in which a mutual harmony shows itself ; but it is a lower depth which must disclose itself if the connexion would be perfected ; the religious sentiments, the concerns of the soul, the things which relate to the imperishable, are those which establish the foundations of a friendship, as well as crown its summit.

Goethe.

SAY nothing ill of any man, unless certain it is true.
Say nothing ill unless certain that no evil or selfish motive animates you.

DEATH is but a kind and welcome servant, who unlocks with noiseless hand life's flower-encircled door, to show us those we love.

ALL satisfaction in life is based upon the regular recurrence of outward things. The alternation of day and night, of the seasons of the year, of flowers and fruits, and whatever else returns from time to time, and which we can and ought to enjoy ; these are the proper impelling powers of the earthly life. The more open we are to these pleasures, so much happier we are ; but if the variety of these things appear before us without our participating in it, if we are inhospitable towards visitors so genial, then comes upon us the greatest evil, the heaviest disease, and we regard life as a disgusting burden.

Goethe.

IN the present state of knowledge, politics, so far from being a science, is one of the most backward of all the arts ; and the only safe course for the Legislator is, to look upon his craft as consisting in the adaptation of temporary contrivances to temporary emergencies. His business is to follow the age, and not at all to attempt to lead it. He should be satisfied with studying what is passing around him, and should modify his schemes, not according to the notions he has inherited from his fathers, but according to the actual exigencies of his own time. For he may rely upon it, that the movements of society have now become so rapid, that the wants of one generation are no measure of the wants of another ; and that men, urged by a sense of their own progress, are growing weary of idle talk about the wisdom of their ancestors, and are fast discarding those trite and sleepy maxims which have hitherto imposed upon them, but by which they will not consent to be much longer troubled.

Buckle.

PERHAPS the most delightful friendships are those in which there is much agreement, much disputation, and yet more personal liking.

THOUGHT is born in prayer, and matured by prayer.

PRIDE depends on the consciousness of self applause ; vanity is fed by the applause of others. Pride is a reserved and lofty passion, which despairs those external distinctions that vanity eagerly grasps. The proud man sees, in his own mind, the source of his own dignity, which as he well knows, can neither be increased nor diminished by any acts except those which proceed solely from himself. The vain man, restless, insatiable, and always craving after the admiration of his contemporaries, must naturally make great account of those external marks, those visible tokens which, whether they be decorations or titles, strike directly on the senses, and thus captivate the vulgar, to whose understandings they are immediately obvious. This, therefore, being the great distinction, that pride looks within, while vanity looks without, it is clear then when a man values himself for a rank which he inherited by chance, without exertion and without merit, it is a proof not of pride but of vanity, and of vanity of the most despicable kind.

Buckle.

I HOLD that we are distinctively men in the degree in which we are producing effects for others, and not in the degree in which we are heaping up treasure or pleasure for ourselves. For life after all, has its best blessings in the exercise of our highest feelings ; it is when we range up in our moral sensibilities ; it is when we become creators in some sense of the feelings of enjoyment and happiness in others ; it is when we vindicate our titles as sons of God, by the doing of His work among men, that we begin to have supernal pleasures which time cannot take away, and which sorrow itself cannot cloud.

H. W. Beecher.

I HAD rather judge men's minds by comparing their thoughts with my own, than judge of thoughts by knowing who utter them.

WE find everywhere, that the prevailing feeling is to look upon the defence of Christianity as a matter not external to, but part of religion. Belief is regarded, not as the result of an historical puzzle, the solution of an extremely complicated intellectual problem, which presents fewest difficulties and contradictions, but as the recognition by conscience of moral truth. In other words, religion, in its proofs, as in its essence, is deemed a thing belonging rather to the moral, than the intellectual portion of human nature. Each dogma is the embodiment, and inadequate expression of a moral truth, and is worthless except as it is vivified by that truth. The progress of criticism may shift and vary the circumstances of our historical faith, the advent of new modes of thought may make ancient creeds lifeless and inoperative, but the spirit that underlies them is eternal. The idolatry of dogmas will pass away, and Christianity being rescued from the sectarianism and intolerance that have defaced it, will shine by its own moral splendor.

W. E. H. Lecky.

THEOLOGY ! Theology ! Oh ! how the poor world has in all ages been cursed by it ! But gradually, though slowly, one thing after another escapes from the thraldom of theology. Now it is Geology, and now it is Astronomy ; and by and by, in the progress of science and civilization, religion itself will escape from it.

Gerrit Smith.

A public that hears the opinion of old men only, gets wise beyond its years, and nothing is more unsatisfactory than a mature opinion when adopted by an immature mind.

Goethe.

THE great question in life is the suffering we cause ; and the utmost ingenuity of metaphysics can not justify the man who has pierced the heart that loved him.

THAT the system of morals propounded in the New Testament, contained no maxim which had not been previously annunciated, and that some of the most beautiful passages in the Apostolic writings, are quotations from Pagan authors, is well known to every scholar; and so far from supplying, as some suppose, an objection against Christianity, it is a strong commendation of it, as indicating the intimate relation between the doctrines of Christ and the moral sympathies of mankind in different ages. But to assert that Christianity communicated to man moral truths, previously unknown, argues on the part of the asserter, either gross ignorance or else willful fraud. For there is unquestionably nothing to be found in the world, which has undergone so little change as those great dogmas of which moral systems are composed. They have been known for thousands of years, and not one jot or tittle has been added to them.

Buckle.

THE awful inviolability of justice is shown by the eternal course of God's laws bringing the exactly deserved penalty upon every soul that sinneth. The boundless mercy of God, his atoning love, is shown by the absence of all vindictiveness from his judgments, their restorative aim and tendency. Whenever the sinner repents, reforms, puts himself in a right attitude, God is waiting to pardon and bless him.

It is not belief but love, that dominates the soul—not a mental act but a spiritual substance. According as the realities of the soul are what they should be, just and pure, or what they should not be, perverted and corrupt, and according as the realities of the soul are in right relations with truth, beauty, goodness, or in vitiated relations with them, so, and to that extent, is the soul saved or lost.

W. R. Alger.

ALL men see the same religious truths at the same plane of development.

A LOST FAITH is sometimes the cause of a dismal solitude of soul. A sceptic of fine sensibility, robbed of long cherished beliefs and provided with no substitute, missing that wonted ministration, may feel as lonely as a pilgrim overtaken by night on an Alpine ice-ocean—a dark speck of despair between the shining sea of the ice and the colder sea of stars, a conscious interrogation point of fate. His true course is to face his doubts without flinching, boldly follow every clew, make no unfaithful compromises, but traverse the deserts of negation to their end, keeping a spirit open, silent and watchful for every light of Providential direction, and every voice of Divine reality. He will then find denial but the precursor of affirmation, and disbelief but a process of growth, an extrusion of dead husks for the appearance of living gems. Dogmatic assent will be superseded by spiritual experience, insight will take the place of tradition, and blessed truths richly compensate for the outgrown formularies, which it cost him so much pain to abandon. His trial is in leaving the injurious, but endeared, companionship of beliefs no longer fitted to the wants of his mind, but which he has always supposed indispensable. His reward will be to gain a new companionship of higher and truer views, better beliefs, more accurately adjusted to his real wants, as a conscious sojourner in time, and a responsible pilgrim to eternity.

W. R. Alger.

WHATEVER theologians may choose to assert, it is certain that mankind at large has far more virtue than vice, and that in every country good actions are far more frequent than bad ones.

Buckle.

BE fearless and free in thy researches. How silly must seem the fears of some seekers,—afraid lest they should find out something God would rather they did not know.

THE relation of faith to reason is traced by Dr. Newman with a fineness and general truth of discrimination that reminds us of Butler. He rejects the rationalistic conceptions of faith, as either the purely intellectual act of believing on testimonial and other secondary evidence, or the purely moral act of carrying out by the will what has been accepted by the understanding. The former confounds it with opinion, the latter with obedience. He does not narrow the term to the Lutheran dimensions, to denote a reliant affection towards a person, and imply a grace peculiar to the Christian and Jewish dispensations. *It is a moral act of reason*, believing at the instigation of reverence and love, something which goes beyond the severe requirements of the evidence. In matters of pure science, where we have to do with mere nature, the mind simply follows the vestiges of proof. But in concerns of man and God we necessarily carry into every process of judgment, antecedent presumptions which color our whole thought and interpret for us the external signs given to direct us. To a cold intellect these presumptions will be wanting; and it will construe the spiritual as if it were physical. To a bad heart they will be dark suspicions; and it will believe its own shadow. To an affectionate, faithful, humble mind they will be clear trusts; and it "will think no evil" and "hope all things." It is this yielding of the reason to the better suggestion,—this casting of one's lot with the higher possibility, that faith consists.

James Martineau.

I CAN only urge you to prefer friendship to all human possessions; for there is nothing so suited to our nature, so well adapted to prosperity or adversity. But I am of opinion that, except among the virtuous, friendship cannot exist.

Not the death of Jesus, but the life of Christ is our salvation.

THE canonicity of the New Testament Scriptures was decided upon, solely on the ground of their presenting to the whole church clear statements of Apostolical Christianity. The idea of their being written by any special command of God or verbal dictation of the Spirit, was an idea wholly foreign to the primitive churches. They know that Christ was in Himself a Divine revelation ; they know that the Apostles had been with Him in His ministry ; they know that their hearts had been warmed with His truth, that their whole religious nature had been elevated to intense spirituality of thinking and feeling by the possession of His Spirit, and that this same Spirit was poured out without measure upon the church. Here it was they took their stand, and in these facts they saw the reality of the Apostolic inspiration ; upon these realities they reposed their faith, ere ever the sacred books were penned ; and when they were penned, they regarded them as valid representations of the living truth which had already enlightened the church, and as such alone pronounced upon their canonical and truly apostolic character.

J. D. Morell.

WHEN spiritualism serves to develop the normal capabilities of the mind ; to purify the natural affections ; to rationalize our views of religion, nature and God ; and to quicken the soul's aspirations after a higher life, it exerts its legitimate influence, and at once ennobles the whole character.

HE only would undertake the government of the universe, who cannot govern his own mind. The wisely cultivated man, conscious how insignificant a drop he is in the vast stream of life, learns his limitation and accepts events with modesty and equanimity.

FAITH in God means but this,—faith in final good ; faith in the onward, upward tendency of all things.

WE have no reason to suppose that probation closes with the closing of the present life; but every relevant consideration leads us to conclude that the same great constitution of laws pervades all worlds and reigns throughout eternity so that the fate of souls is not unchangeably fixed at death. No analogy indicates that after death all will be thoroughly different from what it is before death. Rather do all analogies argue that the hell and heaven of the future will be the aggravation or mitigation or continuation of the perdition and salvation of the present. It is altogether a sentence of exact right according to character, a matter of personal achievement depending upon freedom, an experience of inward elements and states, a thing of degrees, and a subject of continued probation.

W. R. Alger.

I HAVE no lack of faith,—not in the thirty-nine articles, in the creed, or in the catechism, but trust in God. I am content to walk by that. I often find I can feel farther than I can see, and accordingly I rest the great doctrines of Christianity not on reasoning, but reason on intuition.

THERE are worthy minds among us who undoubtedly believe “all things in God.” I meet very few persons who are large minded and good enough to believe so holy a thought of nature.

OUR own will can never be satisfied, even if it should have every thing it wishes; but we are satisfied the moment we renounce it. Without it, we cannot be discontented; with it we cannot be contented.

Pascal.

IN the high and essential sense, every man has faith in Christ just so far as Christ's spirit and Christ's principles become his own, and no farther; or in other words, to the precise extent that he is like Christ.

THE view which seems to be the sole fitting one for our estimate of the character of Christ, is that which regards Him as the great REGENERATOR of humanity. His coming was to the life of humanity, what regeneration is to the life of the individual. This is not a conclusion doubtfully deduced from questionable biographies, but a broad plain inference from the universal history of our race. We may dispute all details; but the grand result is beyond criticism. The world has changed, and that change is historically traceable to Christ. The honor then which Christ demands of us must be in proportion to our estimate of the value of such regeneration. He is not merely a moral reformer, inculcating pure ethics; not merely a religious reformer, clearing away old theological errors, and teaching higher ideas of God. These things he was; but he might, for all we can tell, have been them both as fully, and yet have failed to be what he has actually been to our race. He might have taught the world better ethics and better theology, and yet have failed to infuse into it that new life which has ever since coursed through its arteries and penetrated through its minutest veins. What Christ has really done is beyond the kingdom of the intellect and its theologies; nay even beyond the kingdom of the conscience, and its recognition of duty. His work has been in that of the heart. He has transformed the law into the gospel. He has changed the bondage of the alien for the liberty of the sons of God. He has glorified virtue into holiness, religion into piety, and duty into love.

Of ordinary genius, or powers of any kind, he may have had less or more; but of those hidden faculties by which the highest religious truths are reached and of that fervent loyalty by which the soul is fitted to receive Divine instruction,—of these Christ must have had a superabundant share. Strictly to define his spiritual rank, he must surely have been the man who best fulfilled all the conditions under which God grants His inspiration.

Frances Cobbe.

RELIGION is essentially lonely and not social. The common notion to the contrary is a vulgar fallacy ; a fallacy, however, almost unavoidable from the intimate association of sociality with religious phenomena. The true and pure religious emotions are essentially solitary, and love only loneliness ; but the awe, mystery, helplessness connected with them terrify us, and force us to seek fellowship in our experience of them, as a relief and reassurance. It will always be found that in the exercise of their ultimate religious feelings the highest, greatest, deepest souls irresistibly seek solitude, unspeakably enjoy it, and shrink from society at such times with insuperable repugnance.

THE proper idea of inspiration, as applied to the Holy Scriptures, does not include either miraculous powers, verbal dictation, or any distinct commission from God. On the contrary it consists in the impartation of clear intuitions of moral and spiritual truth to the mind by extraordinary means. According to this view of the case, inspiration, as an internal phenomenon, is perfectly consistent with the natural laws of the human mind,—it is a higher kind of potency which every man to a certain degree possesses.

J. D. Morell.

VANITY is the vice of the social ; but pride is the vice of the recluse, and is by much the less amiable of the two. In the man of vanity the idea of self expands or contracts according to its fancied dimensions in the opinion of others. In the man of pride the idea of self grows from its own centre, and maintains itself independently of the opinion of others.

THERE is no such thing as unselfish benevolence. You cannot give even a cup of cold water without receiving your reward. The soul expects it. To do good is to say to the Great Eternal, I have obeyed Thy law ; reward me accordingly.

IN a country like this, where institutions are moulded and policy determined by public opinion, and especially in emergencies like those which now surround this nation, indifference to public affairs and the principles which underlie them, in man or woman, in clergyman or layman, is both a blunder and a crime.

H. W. Beecher.

THE smile of innocence on the face of the sleeping child is not so beautiful and confiding as the faith of him who reposes on the Eternal.

THOUGHT is life generalized. It arrives, therefore, only as we live.

HAPPINESS cometh only from goodness.

THERE are two most important discoveries in science. First, the universal persistency and indestructibility of Force ; and second, the interpolarity and universal convertibility of Force,—“the conservation of forces” and “the correlation of forces,”—teaching the divine lesson, that all forces as well as all forms in the Universe, are immortal brothers and sisters.

I AM very far from trifling with the idea of death, which is a great and solemn event; but I contemplate it without terror or dismay.—*aut transit, aut finit.* If *finit*, which I cannot and do not believe, there is an end of all ; but I shall never know it ; and why should I dread it ?—which I do not. If *transit*, I shall ever be under the same constitution and administration of government in the universe, and I am not afraid to confide in it.

John Adams.

THERE can be no doubt that to Jesus first of all human teachers, we owe the connected presentation of the two great ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and the doctrine that a life fashioned in conformity with these ideas, is the essence and substance of true religion.

No amount and no force of reasoning will remove the persuasions that belong to a man's mental condition. The slow process of education which has made him what he is must be modified if at all by another slow process of education.

SPIRITUALISM is a new religion ; it incarnates a new idea, and that idea is, naturalness of the spiritual, instead of being supernatural.

WHAT we look for in a book is far less the author than ourselves

IN the perusal of philosophical works, "Until you understand a writer's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding."

THERE is no authority except TRUTH and no interpretation of this that is binding upon us, save that which results from the convictions of our reason, and our highest intuitions.

FRIENDSHIP is a sacred name; it is a holy thing; it never arises but between good men; exists only by mutual esteem; supports itself not so much by services on either part as by goodness of life. That which makes one friend certain of the other, is the knowledge he has of his integrity. The sureties which he has for him are his good disposition, fidelity, and steadfastness. There cannot be friendship where there is cruelty, where there is disloyalty, where there is injustice



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An Historical Outline of the Ancient Theatre

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By
JOHN KARDOSS

An Historical Outline of the Ancient Theatre

A lecture delivered at the invitation of Sydney University Dramatic Society at Sydney University no the 20th September, 1950.

By
JOHN KARDOSS

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IN dealing with the origin and development of the ancient theatre, we should observe, by way of introduction, that this is but a modest attempt to give an historical outline, by using all the available authentic sources for the purpose. Theories are innumerable concerning this subject, and leading modern scholars do not agree about important aspects, but a general description of ancient theatres may be given in broad outline.

The different theatrical cultures are dealt with in chronological succession, and by no means exhaustively, in the definite framework of one lecture. As far as possible we shall discuss the ancient theatres, not in their theoretical and scholastic isolation, but in their living interplay as the simultaneous movements of different great cultural groups.

Although the following statement is controversial, we still consider that the depth and height of a culture are usually measurable by the development of its arts. Societies in possession of ancient traditions and an instinct of culture always show sympathy for the arts. The arts affect the masses and the masses have their impact on the arts. Among the arts it was the theatre that made the greatest impression on the masses during ancient times.

Speaking of ancient theatres, people think mostly of the Greek theatre culture, which was the predecessor of all the theatres of modern Europe. The Greek theatre developed from the Dionysiac festival, and, according to Herodotus and modern writers who have studied this subject thoroughly, the festival had its inception in Egypt, where religious and dramatic texts were probably theatrically presented by the priests.

The story of the Egyptian Dramas originated about 3200 B.C., but the content of the so-called Pyramid Texts would appear to indicate that it may date from 4000 B.C. The plot of the Pyramid Texts—which

were written on the interior walls of the Pyramids and tombs—deals with the resurrection of the deceased body, or the ascent of the souls of the deceased, to become one of the Imperishable Stars.

The drama next in sequence was the Memphite Drama, probably a Coronation Festival Play circa 3100 B.C. The plot of the Memphite Drama was the celebration of the claims to the supreme Godhood of Ptah.

A probable Coronation Festival Play was the next in sequence and dates from the reign of Senwosret I of the XII Dynasty, which is termed the Middle Kingdom period, approximately 2000 B.C. The festival plays acclaimed the elevation of Pharaoh to the throne. The Heb-Sed was a Coronation Jubilee Celebration and symbolized the renewal of the king's power through death and resurrection.

Egyptologists recognized one Medicinal play, the purpose of which was either faith healing or magic.

The sole Egyptian play known to historians, the Abydos Passion Play, otherwise known as the Osiris Passion Play, tells the story of the treacherous death and dismemberment of Osiris and the re-assembling of his limbs by his sister-wife, Isis, and their son, Horus. This passion play was performed at Abydos, probably until the latter part of the XXVIth Dynasty, between 569 and 526 B.C.

Performances of these Egyptian plays were regularly arranged, and in most instances "theatres" were specially constructed for the purpose. The Pyramid Texts, the Coronation Festival Plays and the Heb-Seds were presented in so-called "mortuary temples," which except in the reign of the XVIII-XX Dynasties were attached to the tombs of the kings. The Medicinal Drama and the Abydos Passion Play were presented at the "houses of gods".

There is much to explore in connection with the ancient Egyptian Theatre, and any exact interpretation of its drama remains to be established by Egyptologists and scientists.

Between Egypt and Greece "there is a land called Crete, in the midst of the wine-dark sea, a fair, rich land, begirt with water, and therein are many men past counting and ninety cities", sang Homer. The re-discovery of the lost Cretan civilization is one of the major achievements of modern archaeology. The Cretans' literature is a sealed book; no scholar could read the Cretan script. One may at least contemplate the ruins of the theatres which were erected in the palace courts.

In about 2000 B.C., at Phaestos, ten tiers of stone seats were built running some eighty feet along a wall, overlooking a flagged court. At Cnossos there is a much larger structure also in stone. These court theatres had an auditorium which seated between four hundred and five hundred persons. The Cretan theatres are the most ancient of which we know and are fifteen hundred years older than the famous Theatre of Dionysos at Athens.

What was enacted on the stage is a mystery. There are frescos depicting audiences, but no-one can tell us what they witnessed. There is a painting from Cnossos portraying a group of aristocratic ladies, surrounded by their gallants, watching gaily petticoated girls dancing in an olive grove. Other paintings show rustic folk dances or the wild dance of priests, priestesses and worshippers before an idol or sacred tree.

Only wealth and security, taste and leisure, tradition arm in arm with progress, could make possible such a high degree of culture as the Cretans'.

Proceeding from west to east we arrive in India, where Brahma is reputed to have invented the theatre and to have commanded that the first playhouse should

be built, in order that Bharata, the 'father of Hindu drama, could present his plays.

The earliest Indian dramatic development known by theatre historians was most likely that of the dialogue form, employed in the Vedic hymns of the Rig-veda, approximately 1500 B.C., but the true beginning came later—about the same period as in Greece, i.e., 500 B.C. About this time the Epic Period of Hindu literature opened. Two great Indian epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, were source books of Hindu dramatists, even as the Iliad and Odyssey were to the Greek authors.

There were suppositions that the conquest by Alexander the Great may have exercised a Greek influence on the Indian theatre by way of travelling actors; however no evidence was found to substantiate this hypothesis.

The Indian theatre, like the Egyptian, began as a religious impulse in the hearts and souls of men, reaching the borderline of dream and reality.

On our arrival at the coast of the Yellow Sea, we soon realize that the theatre of China is recognized as second in point of world chronology. The theory of theatre historians is that the Chinese theatre was established in the Hsia Dynasty, 2205-1766 B.C., as a form of religious worship and celebration of military successes made by interpretive dancing theatrical in presentation.

The Hsia Dynasty was followed by the Shang Dynasty, and during the latter reign, from 1766-1122 B.C., these dances included other ceremonies in honour of deities controlling rain and drought, or harvest and famine. A stage was erected to heighten the dramatic effect and the dances were displayed upon it.

Speaking of ancient Chinese theatre, we should not interpret the word "theatre" in the accepted sense of to-day. These were religious "performances" and the

'plays' were not intended for the people but only for the Emperor, his court and the priests. Centuries passed before the performing of public plays.

In the Chou Dynasty, 1122-221 B.C., the shen-hsi, which were plays with a sacred motive, became essentially dramatic in manner of presentation. During this period, about 700 B.C., an attempt was also made by the Emperor to found a popular theatre, but his successors disapproved, and no records now remain to bear witness to the success of his venture. Perhaps the failure was due to the inherent hostility to poetic drama, but this could also have been due to political or other motives.

The Ch'in Dynasty, from which China derived its name, reigned from 221-206 B.C., and the Emperor Ch'in Shi Huang, who divided the country into provinces, employed large troupes of actors at his famous Ah Fong palace.

Although the later development of the Chinese theatre is interesting it has no place in the framework of this lecture.

WHEN considering the classical theatre, we observe that, apparently from Crete and Asia, came that prehistoric culture of Mycenæ and Tiryns, which gradually transformed the immigrating Achaeans and the invading Dorians into civilised Greeks. It would therefore appear that the roots of the Greek theatres are to be found in Crete, but then again, according to Herodotus, the Dionysiac festival of the Greeks had its inception in Egypt. Probably both places contributed to the development of the Greek Theatre.

The sixth century B.C. in Greece crowned the already distinguished accomplishments by laying the foundation of the drama.

Dionysos was the god of wine and fertility and each year the Greeks held four Dionysiac festivals in his

honour. On these occasions the worship of Dionysos took the form of dance and phallic songs of crudity and obscenity, which were sung, accompanied by music.

Among the Dionysiac festivals the fourth—and final—was the most important. This was the City Dionysia or Great Dionysia. This was celebrated with the greatest ceremony. Tragedy held first place here, even as comedy did at Lenæa, which was the second Dionysiac festival.

The festivities at first were improvised in a spirit of lively religious fervour. The poet Arion formalized them in the seventh century, B.C.

The poem composed to the honour of Dionysos was the dithyramb. A chorus of fifty men—Choreuti—performed the dithyrambs. They were dressed as satyrs in costumes of goatskin decorated with the tails of horses, snub-nosed masks, beards, long animal-like ears, and an artificial phallos, which symbolized fertility in the religion of the Greeks. The chorus did not impersonate the character of the satyr.

Thespis conceived the idea of improving the dithyramb in a simple but far-reaching manner, namely by introducing the first actor. Dialogue between the actor and the chorus was then introduced. With the first actor disguises were introduced, and the actor and the Choryphæus — leader of the chorus — enacted scenes from the life of the God.

The subjects of the early plays were firstly the life and adventures of Dionysos, secondly Homer's ancient epics.

When Thespis separated himself from the chorus he made a revolutionary reform. By giving himself individual recitative lines he developed the notion of conflict and gave us the drama in its more strict sense. On Greek vases, Thespis is mostly seen sitting in a car. The name of all touring actors—known as Thespians—took its origin from here.

In 534 B.C. Peisistratos, the Tyrannus of Athens, established the first public contest for tragedy in Athens, and Thespis became the first victor. Unfortunately none of the plays of Thespis has survived.

Fifty years after Thespis the stage was set for the great age in the history of the Greek theatre, when Æschylus and Athens returned victorious from the battle of Salamis.

Æschylus was the first great writer of the theatre whose work is known to us. He lived from 525 to 456 B.C. and wrote well over seventy plays, but only seven have remained for posterity. Fortunately those which have survived were written at various periods during the life of the author and so represent his whole work. Because of the shortage of time at our disposal we may only mention some plays of Æschylus: *The Suppliants*, *The Persians*, *Prometheus Bound*. *The Oresteia* was a tetralogy of which the satyric play portion is missing.

The first great rival of Æschylus was Sophocles, who also did his share in the political life of Athens and who was twice elected general, the highest office in the state.

Sophocles wrote more plays than Æschylus, but, as with the latter, only seven of Sophocles' plays remain. Scholars disagree as to the chronology of his plays, but the majority place the *Ajax* first. Later came *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Philoctetes* and the posthumously produced *Oedipus Coloneus*.

Sophocles' principal innovation was the introduction of the third actor, which hastened the development of the dramatic form.

As the third great writer of tragedy, Euripides followed Sophocles and had a difficult struggle before achieving success. He wrote approximately one hundred plays, but won the first prize only on four occasions. After his death a fifth victory was awarded him.

Among his plays the *Hippolytus* won first place in the contest in 428 B.C. The *Hecuba* was very popular through all antiquity. Later he wrote *The Madness of Heracles*, the *Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Electra*. The *Phoenician Women* was one of the greatest successes in the ancient world. The *Orestes*, performed in 408 B.C., was revived in 341 B.C. After the death of Euripides came *The Bacchantes* (405 B.C.) and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, left unfinished at his death. The younger Euripides completed it.

According to Aristotle the comedy developed from the same source, parallel with tragedy. The great writer of comedies was Aristophanes, who was imprisoned on several occasions in the course of his career, because of the outspoken and topical allusions in his plays to unpopular persons and causes. Aristophanes was the greatest exponent of the Old Comedy—approximately from 500 B.C. to 400 B.C.—which developed with the rise of Greek democracy and declined with it. His earliest extant play is *The Acharnians*, which was the third in point of production. Some others are *The Knights*, *The Clouds*, *The Wasps*, *Peace*, *Birds*, *Lysis-trata*, *The Frogs*, *Women in Parliament*.

Between Old Comedy and Middle Comedy there is not an exact borderline and Aristophanes belonged to both periods.

The New Comedy began about 330 B.C. Its most significant writer was Menander with more than one hundred plays, eight of which won the comic prize.

The achievements of these immortal figures of Greek drama were probably due in no small degree to the spirit of competition, which was the basis of all Dionysiac festivals.

The Dionysiac festivals were first held on a hollow below a hillside, later a wooden structure was erected, and finally an imposing stone theatre was built, seating approximately 30,000 persons. The ruins of the

Theatre of Dionysos at Athens exist to this day on the hillside below the Acropolis.

The theatre belonged to the State, and the Archon, a public official, had the duty of producing the play by bringing together the interested groups. Previously the poets, then the actors, were selected by the state. Again the State nominated for each poet a Choregos who had to finance the production, providing the costumes and properties, paying the chorus and musicians. He had to cover all expenses relating to the performance of the play.

In the tragedies, only three actors played, but many people appeared on the stage as attendants and soldiers. Fifteen members of the chorus were highly trained in declamation, dancing and music. The comedies had a larger chorus, usually comprising twenty-four persons.

The costs were a heavy burden to the Choregos, so during the Peloponnesian wars the authorities allowed the expenses to be shared by two or more Choregi. At the end of the fourth century B.C. the State took over the responsibility and bore all the expenses.

The performances were originally free of charge to the entire population, but later, because of many complaints, the State issued tickets for the seats and charged a small fee. All citizens were however entitled to witness the plays, and for the poor the State officials provided the entrance fee.

The dramas were performed as part of the festival of Dionysos under the presidency of his priests, and the theatre was endowed with the sanctity of a temple. Offences committed therein were punished severely as being of a sacrilegious nature.

The festival began with a colourful procession, known as the Proagon, led through the city by the priests, the officials, poets, actors, the Choregi, the members of various choruses, and the musicians. These were

followed by the population of the city and the many strangers who had come to join the celebrations.

The statue of Dionysos was brought to the theatre and placed near the stage. The performances were preceded by the sacrifice of an animal to the God. Announcements were then made as to the plays to be performed on the following day. Choral competitions usually preceded the performances. The poet then appeared and announced his plays, which would then be performed.

Three poets competed at each festival, each being required to produce a tetralogy, three tragedies and a satyric drama—or a didaskalia (a teaching piece for the chorus). Each piece was independent artistically.

The players who appeared in these dramas were at first the protagonists, then the deuteragonists, then those who played the minor characters were termed the tritagonists. All wore neither contemporary nor strictly historical costumes. A special type of costume was evolved. The height of the actor was increased by a stout boot with a thick sole. This was the kothornos. In order that the tens of thousands of spectators should be able to see the countenances of the actors, a certain number of set masks was evolved. These signified, by simple outline and shape, the general attributes of the particular character. To indicate the condition of a character, colour—as a symbol of emotion—was also used. For instance, dark or dim colours signified grief or mourning. The onkos was a lofty headdress which towered above the mask to give physical importance and added height to the actor. The kothornos and the onkos have raised an actor of six feet to over seven feet six inches in height. To prevent the actor appearing unduly slim, padding was plentifully used.

The actors, who were termed “Dionysian Artists”, all held a very honourable position in the national life.

Audiences at the theatre wore holiday dress, and in the earlier periods they also wore wreaths. The front row of the theatre was reserved for people of importance, e.g., representatives of allied states, ambassadors, various priests, state officials and adjudicators. In the centre of the front row was the throne of honour for the priest of Dionysos. The audience sat on stone benches from sunrise to sunset with only one interval. It was a triumph of art that the extraordinary enthusiasm of the people made this possible.

The performances would continue on the following days and the judges would then choose the winning poets. The victorious poet would be brought to the stage and crowned with a chaplet of ivy. A solemn sacrifice would be made and the proceedings would be terminated by a feast given by him to his actors, chorus and friends.

In those times, when only a small number of the people could read, and scripts were rather rare, the theatre had a useful educational purpose and the poets exercised a considerable influence as teachers.

It is amazing how quickly and widely the theatrical art of the Greeks matured. Seeking for the motive we come to the conclusion that perhaps out of the proud sense of independence, individual and collective, there developed a strong impetus to every enterprise of the Greeks. Freedom inspired the Greeks to incredible accomplishments, in art, poetry, science and other fields of endeavour.

Looking down from the Acropolis on the ruins of the Theatre of Dionysos we can see only dead stones, but the culture that once flourished there is immortal. It lives in our mind, it beats in our heart and forms the living cultural basis of our whole modern civilization.

FOllowing the ancient Greek settlers, sailing the fair waves of the Mediterranean, we remember those

words of Plato: "Like frogs around a pond, we have settled down upon the shores of this sea." These settlers, who were reared in the brilliant and turbulent life of Hellas, took its culture with them to the shores of Southern Italy and Sicily. The theatre played an important role in these settlements during the classical period. The tragedy was introduced from Attica.

The *Women of Aetna* by Æschylus was presented in the theatre of Syracuse—which was the oldest and most beautiful in Sicily—under Hiero I, the tyrant of Syracuse (478 to 467 B.C.), who, although despotic in his rule, was a liberal patron of literature and the arts.

Euripides was especially popular; so much so that, after the unfortunate Athenian expedition against Sicily, Greek captives won their freedom because of their ability to recite passages from his dramas.

The staging of tragedy remained the same as in Greece, but the comedy differed sharply from that of Athens. These merry pieces had no chorus and resembled very much the mimes of Epicharmus, who first set them in literary form during the fifth century B.C. Epicharmus parodied mythology in some plays, and made a travesty of daily life in others.

About 300 B.C. Rhinthon of Tartenum gave literary form to the parody of the tragedy. It was called hilarotragodia. For both plays and actors the more general term was phlyakes, or gossips. There is little literary evidence of the existence of the phlyakes, and it is primarily in the vase paintings that we find all that we now know of them.

The farce wandered from south to north, from Syracuse through Tarentum and Pæstum, to Oscan Atella—which was the ancient Abdera and is the present-day Aversa—where not long after the rise of the phlyakes there developed in its indigenous form, the *Fabula Atellana*. Now a literary form, the *Fabula Atellana* pro-

duced two important writers, Pomponius and Novius. They are credited with introducing to Rome the Atellan farce; however, the *Fabula Atellana* was previously not unknown, though the Roman writers did not use it.

The Atellan farces, like the phlyakes, developed different types of masks of unusual ugliness. The costumes resembled the phlyakes and the actors wore the symbol of fertility, so characteristic of ancient farce.

The Atellan farce became very popular in Rome with amateurs and professionals and both performed before public and private audiences.

In Greek Southern Italy tragedy and comedy flourished in the form of farce while Rome — in the first centuries of the Republic — as yet uncivilized, remained content with very primitive plays, which were called after the Etruscan city *Fescennia* versus *Fescennini*.

In Etruria dance and music were currently popular. The Etruscan Ludiones, flautists and dancers, first went to Rome in 364 B.C. to participate in the Ludi (games) Etrusci.

The form of the *Satura* or *Fabulæ Saturæ* originated in the blending of the Fescennine verses with Etruscan histriones. This Etruscan term, histriones, for mimes and dancers was adopted by the Romans for all actors. The definite metre of the *Satura* was the *Saturninus* or *Saturnian* verse, which presented small scenes from daily life. We notice that the *Satura* was not equivalent to the Greek Satyric drama.

However the young Roman Republic borrowed its drama, like most of its art, from the Greeks.

The first important Roman dramatist was Livius Andronicus. He had been taken captive as a child and brought to Rome as a slave. His native Tarentum so loved the theatre that the citizens were attending a dramatic performance instead of defending the city

when the Roman invaders sailed into their harbour. Livius Andronicus is the first known translator of the ancient world. He translated tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides as well as some Greek comedies. His command of both Greek and Latin enabled him to become a tutor and eventually a freed man. He is credited also with the first production both of tragedy and comedy, in the year 240 B.C., on the occasion of the Ludi Romani.

Nævius was a Roman citizen and the younger contemporary of Livius Andronicus. He also translated many of the old plays, moreover he was the creator of the *Fabulæ Prætextatæ*, and therefore of the Roman national drama, which took its name from the purple-striped patrician toga. We should emphasize the great advantage Nævius had in being able to obtain ready-made material from the Greeks.

Plautus and Terentius, or as he is better known. Terence, borrowed freely from the Greek New Comedy, particularly from Menander. They patronized a famous type of Roman comedy, the *Fabula Palliata*.

Interesting names among the writers are Strabo, the orator; then the brother of the great Cicero, Quintus Tullius Cicero; also Lucius Cornelius Balbus, called Minor; and last but by no means least the great Julius Cæsar, of whose plays none now remains.

The second son of the philosopher and statesman Seneca the Elder was Lucius Annæus Seneca, eight of whose plays are known to us. He wrote sentimental dramas and outlined a dramatic form which is still popular. Seneca is an important figure in the history of drama, because his tragedies were to become the model for all subsequent periods of the theatre. He influenced the Elizabethan playwright, the Neo-Classical French writers, Racine and Corneille, and also the English dramatists of the eighteenth century, Rowe, Cibber and Murphy.

Some characteristic plays of the authors are: *Amphitruo*, *The Captives*, *The Merchant* and *Truculentus* by Plautus; *Andria*, *Eunuch*, *Adelphi* and *Phormio* by Terence; *The Daughters of Troy*, *Hercules*, *Agamemnon*, *Thyestes* and *Medea* by Seneca.

By the time that Roman dramatic performances were given, the old religious feeling that had dominated the early Greek dramas was no longer the inspiring influence. The Roman performances were often merely public holidays, or special occasions for the celebration of victories. The association with the temple had ended, and the theatre for the Romans remained nothing but a theatre. Under Roman influence the theatres changed considerably and eventually all the ancient theatres had adapted themselves to the new conditions.

The new theatres built by the Romans differed from the Greek in many respects, whether the Classical, Hellenistic, or the Græco-Roman. The Greeks usually built their theatres on the slope of a hill, whereas the Romans built theirs on a plain. More important changes were made in the arrangement of the auditorium or cavea, and of the stage itself. The stage was enlarged and provided with a sloping roof, which probably improved the acoustics. The front of the stage structure was ornamented with statues and architectural features. A curtain (auleum) was introduced to mark the commencement and end of the play. When the performances began the curtain was lowered, instead of being raised as it is to-day.

The oldest Roman theatre that has been preserved is the theatre of Pompeii. In Rome, for some considerable time, the Senate opposed the erection of stone play-houses, and that theatre, which was completed in the year 154 B.C., was ordered to be demolished because it was deemed to be contrary to public morals.

Many theatres of wood were built in Rome and continually torn down. The most famous was that

erected in the *Aedileship* of Marcus Aemilius Scaurus in the year 58 B.C. According to the historian Pliny, this theatre had an auditorium seating eighty thousand persons and the stage was decorated with 360 columns in three storeys, the lowest being of marble, the middle one of glass and the upper one of gilded wood. Three thousand bronze statues were erected between the columns. Possibly the whole story was exaggerated; however this costly theatre was also demolished.

The first permanent stone theatre was not constructed until 55-52 B.C. under the sponsorship of Pompey. According to Plutarch, this playhouse was copied from the Hellenistic theatre at Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. Vitruvius wrote that the auditorium had sufficient seating accommodation for forty thousand spectators. The theatre was rebuilt and remodelled by Augustus Cæsar in 32 B.C. and later by Tiberius Caligula and others and so it became typically Roman, and approximately ten thousand persons could be seated.

Balbus in the year 13 B.C. built a gorgeous stone theatre in the Campus Martius. Cæsar began and Augustus completed in 11 B.C. the Theatre of Marcellus, on the south-west slope of the Capitoline Hill. This is still one of the great monuments of the Eternal City.

The art of acting was highly developed among the Romans partly because they were the direct inheritors of the Greek art of acting, partly because the Italians have always had, and possess to this day, a special talent for the theatre. They are excellent in improvisation, have lively and expressive gestures, great skill in the use of language, and are masters of mimicry.

The costumes used by the Romans were almost invariably modelled on the Greek.

The Roman actor played without masks until the first century B.C. and, in contrast to the Greeks, was

able to develop facial expressions. The masks was reintroduced with many other ancient Greek customs by Roscius, who was the most famous Roman actor. Roscius acted in both tragedy and comedy, and in each he played in masks. Some say that he insisted on masks because he had a squint.

In spite of Roscius, who had won for himself fame and esteem even to the extent of being knighted by Sulla, the acting profession lost its status under the Romans, so much so that the actors themselves were despised. This once venerated profession fell still further when the *mimi* was introduced and women first appeared on the stage, prostituting themselves to the lower tastes of a vulgar audience. The low social position of the actors was one of the fundamental reasons of the decline of Roman drama.

The Romans loved bloodshed and scenes of violence on the stage. In this aspect they greatly differed from the Greeks. But there is a point where Roman and Greek, classical and modern meet; they all had and have the elemental human desire, the passion to go to the theatre, to act in the theatre. Actors and spectators borne on the wings of poetic genius, touch the unexplored heights and depths of the human soul; their eyes, hearts and minds fill with wonders, and by this dionysian union they participate—sometimes smiling, sometimes tearful—in the highest living art.

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Eendörp.



b

Plattdeutsche Rymels

von

J. Krohn.

Dr. Matthias Schön.

Hamburg.

B. G. Berendsohn.

1856.



Geendorp.

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Plattdeutsche Rymels

von

J. Krohn.

(Dr. Matthias Schön, + 1870)

Hamburg; confer allegramma dantis
Leipzig, Band 32, 1849 und Grundzüge der
Kirchgeschichtsliteratur, von Band 6, Seite
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Hamburg.

B. G. Veredsohn.

1856.

Lünghoff'sche Buchdruckerei.

God'n Dag!

Ich bunn man een slichen Landmann. Aberst de lewe God hett my een Paar Dogen gäwen, damit kann ich goed kieken. Da hev ich nu ook seh'n, dat de Hochdüütschen upstüns veel Bergnöögen an unse Spraak hevt, un Claus Groth un Fris Reuter un Dräger un den lütten Strohhoot, de kenn ich ook un de sel'ge Dokter Bärmann wör myn Frünnnd. Da will ich denn mit Verlöv Se ook een Bitten von unsrer Dörp vertellen, wo dat da geiht un steiht, dat Se des Sündags uns ook mal besööken. Man mööt Se vörleev nehmen mit eenfache Kost, aberst good is't meent. Ich denk, wy föölt gau good Frünn' wäsen un wat uns' Herrgod uns givt, dat Goode, dat wöölt wy vergnööggt geneeten, un dat Slimme, dat köönt

wy tosaam drägen, da geiht dat lichder. Wy köont
doch Eeen sön'nern den Annern nich fertig warrn.
Wenn Se sick nu an myn Rymels to Lyden höögt,
denn schall my dat leew syn.

Adjüs.

J. Krohn.

1. Myn Dörp.

Geiht man dörch Hamborg's Dammdoor 'ruut
Den Rooden-Boom entlang,
Süht wyt in Norden man in'n Dutt,
Beel Boom stahn gröön un slant.

Dat's Neendörp, un de Boom de staht
Da üm de Kark so dichd,
Dat se den Thoorn alleen man laat
Wyt kaamen to Gesichd.

Dat Dörp liggt hoch. Dörch'n Hollweg fahrt
Man langsam 'rup mit'n Waag'n,
Süht glyk, dat All'ns hett Schick un Aart!
Da bünn icc born un taag'n!

Un rund herüm is heel veel Holt,
Vör Roorn un Hen schoin Land,
Un up de Wischen geel as Gold,
Hett' t Beeh syn gooden Stand.

De reine Luchd maak my as Jung
De Backen all fir rood,
Un as ik von de School weggung,
Wöör stämmig ik un groot.

Raast by de Arbeid up dat Feld,
Heel frisch ik bleeven bünn,
Lofreden, nich to knapp an Geld,
Un dat bit düsse Stünn! —

2. Erste Leew.

To Pingsten wöört, as ic by'n Danz
 Myn leewe Elsbeth säh.
 De Düwel! wo wöör Se in Glanz
 Un wo vergnögt danz Se!

Ich hev mit Ehr mank Een appett,
 Se keek my fründlig an,
 Un ság: Johann, wat danzt Du nett!
 Hüüt mööt wy veel heran!

“Verwetten will ic mynen Kopp,
 Ság ic, (dat Hart Kopp fir),
 Du danzt so lichd as wy een Popp!”
 Se lach un maak een Knix.

In'n Gaard'n gung'n wy naaher spazeer'n,
Uns wurr de Tyd nich lang.
Ich faat my'n Hart un säg: "Mlyn Deern,
Sett wy uns up de Bank."

Süh', Elsbeth, ich hev dy so leev,
Ich will dy free'n, vörwahr!"
Se säg: "Du büst een Harten-Deen;
Ich nehm dy öövert Jahr."

3. Bröd'gams Tyd.

De Summer gung heel langsam mal
 Vör my un myn' leev Brund.
 Von fröh an bit de Stünn hendaal,
 Muß ic̄t up't Feld henuut.

Man Awends bleev da noch een Stünn,
 To leiern mit de Deern.
 Wol Dusendmal säg' ic̄t: Ich bunn
 By dy, Elsbeth, so geern.

Det Sündagaags abers harr'n wy Tyd!
 Erst wöörn wy in de Kark;
 Naast slendern wy dörchd Feld so wyt,
 Un frei'n uns mit de Kark.

“ Johann, säg se, un lööp vörnuut,
 Kennst düsse Bloom, myn Hart?
 Bergeet my nich! dyn lüttje Bruud,
 Wat oof mal kaamen ward!”

De Winter lööp heel gau vörby,
 Da wöör'n wy veel tosaam.
 Se wöör all Daag, wo frei' ic̄t my,
 So flätig un so fraam.

Un eh' wy't uns vermöötten dāhu,
 Wöör Pingsten vör de Döör;
 Da schull in myne Stuur ic̄t sehn
 Als Frow dat sööte Göör! —

4. Hoogthyd.

To Pingsten wöör de Kark heel vuß,
Un as de Predigt unt,
Wuß Elkeen, wat da warren schull,
Un Nüms güng nu herunt.

Elsbeth un ic in'n Sündaaagsstaat,
Wy stün'n vör den Altar.
Herr Pastor gäv uns gooden Rath,
Un maak uns Allens klaar.

He legg uns beide Hänn' tosaam,
Un spröök: "Ihr lieben Leut",
Seyd glücklich nun in Gottes Nam'
Auf ew'ge Zeit, wie heut'!"

By Elsbeth's Deller wöör de Röft,
De Baader fir trakteer'!
De Döns wöör proppenvull von Göft,
Un buuten noch veel mehr.

Naa Disch da fung dat Danzen an,
Mus'kanten wöörn da dree.
By dreih'n uns, wat man ichtens kann,
In eene Ratt bit Twee!

Do güng mit Elsbeth ic̄t to Huus. —
De Nachd wöör klaar un warm!
Un as ic̄t nu dat Lichd uutpuus,
Läg se in mynen Arm!

5. Kindsdööp.

Wo löppt de Lyd doch heel geswind,
Is man in God vergnögt!
He schenk uns Beid' een lüttjes Kind,
Dat hett uns bannig höögt.

Dat wöör een lüttjen fixen Jung,
Een Kruuskopp, nich to kleen.
Un wenn myn Frow in'n Slaap em sung',
Da däh' he jümmers schreen.

Bör em hett syn Grootvader kövt,
Een fix un fertig Kleed.
Herr Pastor hett em darinn dövt,
Un Martin he nu heet.

De Jung, de nöhm' mal prächdig too,
Kunn loopen mit Een Jahr.
Bleev uns gesund un maak uns froh
Den heelen Dag, vörwahr!

S'on Segen God's is heel veel werth
Vör Twee, de sick hevt freef;
Un wenn uns' Herr noch Een bescheert,
So is jem dat nich leed!

6. Morgens.

Man'n Häwen steiht all lang de Sünn,
De Wagels piept un sleit.
Un as ic eben my vermünn',
De Thoornklock Beer all sleit.

Sprung ut de Puch heel gau heruit,
Un spröök: "Du leeve God,
Laat waffen fir myn Koorn un Kruut,
Verdriev' de Müüs' un Rott'!"

Kreeg by den Kopp myn lüttje Frow,
De Kinner groot un kleen.
Åät gau myn Morgenbrood darto,
Un stünn stramm up myn Been'.

Güng straks up't Feld! Wo hevt wy maicht!
Bon'n Hückel lööp de Sweet.
Denn wenn de Wind so duse weiht,
Da is dat bannig heet.

7. Middags.

Nu steiht g'rad öwern Kopp de Sünn!
 Ich legg my ünnern Boom.
 Da slöpp verdüwelst gau ic inn,
 Un harr een snaak'schen Droom.

Ich wöör up'n Mal een rieken Mann,
 Harr Peer', un Ködh' un Swyn',
 Un Sülvertüng vör tinnern Kann'
 Myn Frow, wo wöör de syn.

Up'n Sündag güng dat in de Stadt,
 De Grootknechd up den Buck.
 Wat hevt wy vör Pläseer da hatt,
 Ich däh mank dägen Sluck.

Myn Elsbeth danz den Schott'schen geern,
Un kööm heel flink in'n Vog.
Ick suus dageun mit'n smukke Deern,
Dat't in de Been my trogg.

Up eenmal wöör my slechd to Mood,
Perdaus, da läg'n wy Bei'.
Myn Frow säh uit as wy de Dood.
Ick schree : " Myn Ropp is twei!"

Na! säg' myn Nauer, büst'n Göör!
Un stött my in de Syd.
Du schreest, dat ick my fir verföhr!
Staa up, et is all Tyd!

8. Awends.

Als ik verteert myn Speck un Brood
Un oock myn Beer all wöör,
Da suus de Sens', as wy de Dood,
Slank dörch dat Roorn hendöör.

So heb ik bit to'nn Awend maiht,
Man köödm ik suum in Sweet.
Warüm? Wenn jümmers effen weiht
De Wind, ward man nich heet.

An'n Häwen stünn de Sünn heel deep,
Dörch all de Büsch dat suus.
Herr Martens, de Verwalter, reep:
“Na, Kimmers, gaat to Huns!”

Ich nöhm myn Sens' und leddig Kroog,
 Un wank foorts naa myn Rath.
 Von Awendäten wöör genoog,
 Dat smect my delekat.

De Kinner slööpen all heel lang!
 Ich läs nu noch myn Frow
 Gau vör den schoinen Awendsang:
 "Up God, den Herrn, vertroo!"

Nu hevt wy slaapen söven Stünn
 Umtrennt in eenen Strich. —
 Gottlov, dat ic̄ een Landmann bün!
 So slöppt keen Stadtminsch nich. —

9. Een Begrövniß.

Wenn uns' God Een in'n Häwen nümmt,
De uns an Harten liggt,
Groot Truurigkeit un Drangsal kümmt
Da öwer Een woll lichd.

He nöhm to sick uns' gooden Hans,
Von haben an de Tweet'.
De Eerste mit den Doodenkranz,
Un in dat Doodenkleed.

Myn vrouw un ic, wy hevt em leggt
Mit Beenen in syn Gruuv.
Hevt sij een Vader Unser seggt,
Uns daalsett in de Luuw.

Ich säg: "Elsbeth, sy nich bedröövt,
Vergitt nich, wat uns bleev!
De uns' Herrgod am swarsten pröövt,
Hett he am Meisten leev!"

Uns' Kind, dat bringt uns Segen veel
Als Engel in dat Huus.
Davon frigt Allemann syn Deel.
Nu, Elsbeth, giv my'n Kuß!"

10. Herr Pastor.

Dichh by de Kark in't groote Huus,
 Wo heel veel Bööm 'rüm stah'n,
 Un wo oof Nüms vergitt syn Gruus,
 Deiht he voröber gahn;

Da wahnt uns' Pastor all veel Jahr,
 De goede, ohle Mann,
 De uns to Harten sprickt so klaar,
 Dat man nich bießtern kann.

Un wo Gen süükt, da kümmt he glyk,
 Is fründlig, givt syn Seeg'n,
 Un trööst em up dat Himmelryk,
 Wo man kann lichder dreeg'n.

De Kinner hevt em All heel geern! —
Draapt se em fröh un laat,
So loopt se to em, Jung un Deern,
Dat se syn Hännd' man faat.

Woll süht he oock ehrwördig uut,
Mit syne witten Haar!
Een fraamen Godsdeenst kückt heruut,
Uut syn glau Dogenpaar.

Ja, wiß! Uns' Herrgod höllt noch wyt
Bon em de Doodespyn,
Dat he noch kann up lange Tyd
Uns' Fründ un Trööster syn.

11. Grootmoder.

By'n grooten Kachelawen steiht,
Dok in de kleenste Kath,
Een Lehnstool, d'rups een Pulster neiht,
Bör Grootmoder parat.

To Winterslyd sitt se veel da,
Da früüst se jümmers sehr.
In'n Summer führt in'n Gaard'n se naa,
Un tüffelt hen un her.

Hett oock dat lüttste Göör up'n Arm,
Paßt by de Annern up;
Ja! is et man nich gar to warm,
Danzt se mit jem hupp, hupp!

To Winterstyd, da slikt se sic
Dichd vor den Lehnstool hen.
Grootmoder'n slippt all Dogenblick,
Ten Strichwier' up de Tenn.

Se söökt se wedder mid Geschrichd!
Man gävt se ehr erst dann,
Vertellt se noch ins de Geschichd,
Bon'n grooten Wynaachdsmann.

Se hevt so leev se lütt un Groot,
Dat gar nicks dröwer güng.
Un as Grootmoder nu wöör dood,
Heel traurig Tyd anfünng.

12. De Kinner.

In unser Dörp, da kann man rechd
Uns' Herrgod's Segen sehn.
Da loopt, is't buuten nich to slechd,
De Göörn Een mank de Been.

De Lütten kravvelt in den Sand,
Smyt sick de Oogen voll,
Speelt oock mit Steen un annern Land,
Un schreet daby vör dull.

Sünd grööter se, da brüüt se veel
De Höhner un de Göös,
Bit se tolegt mal kriegt ehr Deel;
Son'n Ganner, de is böös.

Sünd se noch grööter, gaht se geern
 Det Summers naa de Rööt.
 He plückt so gau se as de Deern,
 Dat Lügs smecht frisch un fööt.

Mit Stricktüg loopt se un Schoolboek,
 Raa Erdbeer'n un Himbeer'n.
 Un sünd se halvryp man eerst oot,
 Se pröövt se doch heel geern.

In'n Harfst de Brummelbeer'n, ja dat
 Is noch ehr lezte Höög.
 Gaht nich to Huus, sünd se noch swatt,
 Sünft Bader se woll flöög.

De grooten Jung's hevt keen Verkehr
 Mit Deern's, gävt nicks üm jem.
 Se sitt den heelen Dag to Peer,
 Un ried se naa de Swemm.

Ia! wenn se by den Kanter Dohrn,
 Nich in de School mödt syn,
 So föhrt se sleitend Heu un Koorn
 Bit Awends in de Schüün.

De Deer'ns sitt vör de Döör un strichd,
 Reiht Platens sick un stoppt,
 Un klöönt daby, da geiht dat lichd,
 Bon Jung's, de se hevt soppt.

Se drägt naa'n Becker oot dat Brood,
 Kiekt naa Gemüüs un Bloom',
 Treckt Water uit den deepen Sood,
 Nehmt von de Melk den Room.

Sünd Jung's un Deer'ns man consermeert.
 Hevt Arbeit se genoog!
 Man Sündaags se sick amüseert,
 Byn Danz se, he in'n Kroog.

Se danzt vör dull, hett se de Lust
 Man ichtens wedder kreeg'u.
 He sönner Jack fix Regel schuvt
 Un smitt stramm alle Neeg'n!

13. Marktdag.

Is dat een Fahren, Loopen, Schree'n,
 Dat een de Ohren brummt.
 En Sööken, Prööven un Besch'�,
 Da Nüms to End' mit kummt!

Wy hevt jo Markt! Tweemal in't Jahr
 Sünd wy heel uit de Lüüt.
 Uns' Narvers alftosaam, vörwahr,
 To Tyd' ook veel Stadtslüüd.

Man drift den heelen Dag sick' rüm,
 Un smöökt in eenen foort.
 Süht in den Danzsaal sick' mal üm,
 Drinckt Beer un rein Godswoord.

De Orgeldreier mit syn' Aap,
De Kunststückmaaker oock,
De Keerl mit dat achtbeenig Schaap,
Dat kost uns nicks, — sünd flook!

By Seildänzers un Karussell,
Laat wy de Schilling's spring'n.
De Leevst kiekt to! un denn so snell
Mit ehr herüm to swing'n!

Tolegt, da wankt wy noch herinn
Naa Münster syn Danzsaal.
De Deern's verdreibt Een doch den Sinn,
Un wy suust up un daal!

14. Aarndtbeer.

De lezte Waag'n is all heel vull,
 Dat lezte Roorn is av!
 De Mannslüüd de juchheit vör dull,
 De Frown's kaamt oock in'n Drav!

Twee smulke Deer'ns sitt in de Huuk
 Up'n Waag'n, un de Strohhoot,
 Den bunten se drägt, as is Bruuf,
 Lett jem verdeuvelt goed.

De Annern un de Mannslüüd drägt
 Up' Schuller Hark un Fork,
 Un as se achtern Waag' hensleeght,
 Da licht jem naa de Stork.

Man Een geiht vörn mit'n grooten Kranz,
Den up syn Fork he swenkt.
Dat is de Grootknecht, Claasen's Hans,
De sick een Baas hūnt denkt.

Nu fahrt se in dat Dörp herinn
Mit Juchhei'n un Gesang,
Un laadt gau av. Da is de Sünn
An'n Häwen dahl all lang.

De Ollen hevt de Döns utfliert
Mit Büsch'en, Kränz un Bloom,
Mit veel Laterns illuminirt,
Just as by'n Wynaachsdoom.

Un dree Muslanten mit Klarnett,
Biglin un Baß speelt up.
Hoorts ward nu mānnigeen appett
In Schott'schen un Galupp!

15. Fröhjahr.

De Luchd is klaar, de Sünn schynt warm,
De Snee is all wegsmolst!
Icf gaa mit Elsbeth Arm in Arm
Up't Feld un dörch dat Holt.

De Bagels, de von Harfst an sünd
Zu'n warmen Süden west,
De singt allwedder in de Lind,
Un boot sick gau ehr Nest.

Süh! Musje Langbeen kappert oot!
De Reis', de maak em matt.
De Pogg' to finn' is he heel flok,
Un fritt sick wedder satt.

Sneeglöckchen un lütt Margelbloom,
De liekt all dryft herunt.
Un up de Wisch un an den Boom,
Süht man veel gröônes Kruut.

Nu mööt wy denn oof mit den Ploog,
Un mit de Egg' heran.
De by de Hand nich tydig 'noog,
De blivt lichd achteran.

16. Summer.

Up unser Feld, by Behrman's Wisch,
 Bloot de Kantüffeln all!
 Is fuchdig man de Luchd un frisch,
 Sleit schoin de Nachtegall.

Elsbeth de hört se gar to geern,
 Wenn se Kantüffeln hackt,
 Un raakt sick mit uns' lüttje Deern,
 De jümmers heel luut snact.

De Frow kann arbeid'n as vör Twee,
 Wenn wy dat Heu inföhrt;
 De Erste un de Letzt' is se,
 Den Boom Nümmes faster snoört.

Un daby is dat Middagesbrod,
To rechter Tyd up'n Disch!
Dok hevt de Kinner gar keen Roth,
Un blyeft gesund un frisch.

Up'n Awend gaat wy geern noch mal
Inn't Holt, wo't föölig weiht.
Sett up de Bank by'n Dyk uns dahl,
Un denkt, wo good uns geiht.

Sündags, hevt wy man ichtens Tyd,
(To Kark versteiht sic eerst.)
Spazeert wy 'rum un kiekt, wo wyt
De Roggen, Haver, Geerst!

17. Harfst.

De Maamaat eerst, un denn dat Koorn,
 Gävt jümmers veel to doh'n.
 Uns' Herrgod's Seegen is de Spoorn,
 Da will woll Nümmseen roh'n!

Bon Fröh an un so lang dat Dag,
 Da fünd wÿ up dat Feld,
 Bit an de Wall wÿ schach
 Un matt de Hark un Fork henstellt.

Un is düff' Arbeid ook vörby,
 Wat vör de Lünk' lang duurt,
 De an dat Koorn, dat trügg lat wÿ,
 To pleegen sick all luurt;

So mööt wy glyk von fröh bit laat,
Mit Ploog un Egg' uns röhr'n,
Dat goed upgeiht de Wintersaat,
De'n tyd'gen Frost kann stöhr'n.

Nu ward de Awends oock all lang!
Elsbeth de strichd, icf maaf
Myn Barktüng wedder scharp un blank,
Un smöök myn Pypp Tabaak.

18. Winter.

Da fallt nu överleidig Snee,
Godlov, un nich to laat.
Ja! Dütt Jahr is dat'n annern Thee;
Dat is good vör de Saat.

Denn geiht de Frost to Tyden vör,
Un is dat Land nich witt,
Is jümmers dat een groot Mallör;
He nümmt de Saat bös mit.

De Winter is by uns lang good,
Uns früst nich halv so dull,
As in de Stadt so Lütt as Groot
Mit Pelz un Muff un Wull.

Börerst röhrt slytig wy de Arm
 By't Dröschen in de Schüün.
 Da bliert wy jümmers effen warm,
 Un bruukt keen heeten Wijn.

Un sünd wy mit dat Dröschen flaar,
 Sitt man veel in de Stuuv,
 Un kannegeetert von den Jaar,
 Un von de witte Duuv.

Myn Elsbeth un myn beste Grünn',
 De glöövt noch nich an Freed!
 Kann syn! Man he, de maak' de Sünn,
 Bör uns dat Beste weet!

19. Uns' Dokter.

Wy sünd by uns nicht heel veel frank.
Neendörp liggt up de Hööchd.
De frische Luchd maakt, God sy Dank,
Uns stäwig un vergnöög't.

De Kost is jümmers effen goed,
Kantüffeln, Klütjen, Speck,
Boekweetengrütt, Melk, Beer, Swattbrood,
Un Water uut de Beek.

To Tyden aberst süükt wy mal.
Uns' Kinners mehr, as wy;
An Masseln leeg'n se neelich dahl,
Stichhoosten wöör daby.

Da is et denn vörwahr een Glück,
Dat wy uns' Dokter hevt.
Wy hollt up em een grootes Stück;
He kennt goed syn Geschäft.

Is jümmers gau un fix up'n Platz,
By Daag un oock by Nachd.
He is vör uns een rechden Schatz,
God nehm em uns in Achd!

20. Schievenscheeten.

In Summer, is dat nich to heet,
Maakt wy uns Lydverdriet
Uy'n Wisch by't Holt naa Eidelstedt,
Un scheet da naa de Schiev!

Dat führt veel lichder uit as't is.
Ick hev dat markt an my.
Denn höllt man nich de Büß' heel wiß,
So schütt man fix vorby!

Un denn lacht se Gen deegen uit,
De Schievenjung dato!
Ja, alstohoop höllt nich ehr Snunt,
Un kloont dat an de Frow.

Man kiekt man sharp, hett faste Hand,
 Schütt man in't Swatte 'rinn.
 Da dröppt man gar nich an de Kant,
 Un kriggt mal een Gewinn.

Gen Läpel oder Sulkertang,
 Bringt man stolz mit to Huus!
 Myn Elsbeth tööv darup all lang,
 Frei sick un gäv my'n Kuf! —

21. Wettloopen.

Up'n Sündag, is man de Böörmaat
Börby, sünd Groot un Kleen
In ehren besten Sündagsstaat
All tydig up de Been.

Tein Deer'ns puht sick nu so heruut,
As güng dat ghyk to'n Danz,
Un drägt, as wör Elkeen all Bruut,
Up'n Kopp een gröonen Kranz.

Se loopt naa Middag in de Wett,
Dat heele Dörp entlang
Mit eenen Knechd, un wiß, de hett
Darup sick freit all lang.

Elkeen loppt hunnerd Schritt. De Een
 Looft gau de Unner av.
 He maakt de dusend Schritt alleen
 In jummers essen Drav!

Hett he uitloopen se, da kriggt
 He'n sülvern Kroon up'n Hoot,
 Un'n blaue Scherp, un syn Gesicht
 Is voll von Overmood.

Klaast danzt by'n Bagd se, bit de Sünn
 An'n Häwen wedder steikt;
 Spazeert oock Awend's noch een Stünn
 Dörch't Dörp hen un juchheit.

Den annern Sündag, da maakt et
 De Kinner jüstment so.
 Sünd aufsliert, loopt fir in de Wett,
 Danzt un juchheit dato! —

22. Naa de Stadt.

Dev Summerdaags ic̄ ichtens Tyd,
 Gaa Sündags ic̄ to Stadt.
 Myn Elsbeth geiht an myne Syd,
 By flöönt von Dütt un Dat.

Se hett ehr'n besten Beierwand
 Dok an mit Gröön un Rood,
 Un up de Müz mit'n lang blau Band,
 Den neeen swatten Hoot.

So kaamt wy denn heel slank an't Door!
 Da ströomit nu all hernut
 Veel Sündagslüüd, un God verdoor!
 Wo seht de snigger uut.

Wy drengelt uns dörch Zem hendöör,
 Un in de Stadt herinn,
 Un kiekt dörch Finster un dörch Döör
 De schoinen Saaken binn'.

Up Waagens un up Druschen paßt
 By Tyden wy woll up,
 Man twee Mal lööpen wy uns fast,
 Un kreeg'n een lütten Schupp!

Up'n Neeenwall bläv Elsbeth stramm
 Bör all de Ladens stah'n.
 In de ArkAAD'n by'n Reesendamm
 Wull se nich wyder gah'n.

“Kind, säg ic, maak Dyn Hart nich groot,
 Wy hevt ja unser Deel!
 Dat mag all schoin syn un ook goed,
 Man kost dat uns to veel!”

““ Ach, säg se, kööp vör Stin' de Popp,
 De lütt' Beerlanderdeern! ” ”
 “Woll, säg ic, dat kost nich den Kopp,
 De schall se hev'n heel geern.”

Nu keiern wy denn noch heel lang
 By'n Jumfernsteeg herum.
 Da güng ic̄ gau in'n Pawiljon,
 Un nöhm een Gläschēn Rum.

By'n Door kōv ic̄ my een Sigarr,
 Myn Elsbeth sick Erdbeer'n.
 Un up den Beg naa't Dörp, da harr
 Elseen wat to verteer'n.

Un as to Huus wy wör'n, säg ic̄:
 "Dat is lang good da binn!"
 Man steiht Een doch all Oogenblick
 Naa Neendörp hen syn Sinn!"



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LA CHIESA
AL BIVIO

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***LA CHIESA
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PREFAZIONE

Le pagine che seguono non sono state scritte per soddisfare l'acida accredine di tanti gratuiti o inconsulti nemici della Chiesa, o per scandalizzare i semplici che non sanno nè capire nè sopportare le violenze dello zelo e dell'amore amareggiato dei suoi puri e audaci riformatori, e tanto meno per confortare il quieto vivere degli eternamente entusiasti o dei sempre contenti ruminanti della sua greppia — ma per stimolare e spronare i migliori (i più veggenti, cioè, e i più volonterosi) perchè rinfocolino il loro coraggio e non desistano dal lavorare per la « vera » Chiesa di Cristo.

I giudizi più o meno caustici ch'esse qua e là ospitano non sono affatto enunciati, perciò, con superficialità o gratuità da delatori prezzolati o, peggio, con la meschina e riprovevole soddisfazione dei transfughi, ma con sincero rammarico e per dura necessità. Come un figlio il quale fosse messo nelle strette di rimproverare qualche grave colpa od omissione ai suoi genitori, così l'autore di questo umile appello soffre acerbamente di dover rinfacciare a Colei, che è stata la sua iniziatrice alla conoscenza e all'amore del Cristo, le deformazioni che ne avviliscono e insidiano — specie in un'ora

così eccezionale della storia — la figura e la missione.

Queste sono quindi pagine dettate dall'amore e dalla riconoscenza — non dal ricatto o dall'astio. Il loro autore infatti ama profondamente la Chiesa. Quella Chiesa che Cristo stesso ha sognato e il cui passaggio nel mondo, prima di scender nelle catacombe, è stato così pallido e meteorico. Ma anche quell'altre Chiese succedutesi via via per due millenni con fisionomie e forme sempre cangianti, ora aureolate di martirio, ora di equivoca gloria, ora adagiate nel fasto e ora umiliate nel fango, ora quasi disumanate nell'accesa spiritualità, ora lorde di tutti i compromessi terrestri. Egli l'ama perchè, al di là del suo incrinito vaso di creta, essa ha sempre custodito l'acqua viva della Verità attinta un giorno al pozzo di Sichem con la donna dai sette mariti, tanto simile lei stessa alla spregiata etera samaritana. E perchè — si voglia o no — questi venti secoli sono stati imbalsamati dall'odor di narдо ch'essa — sempre peccatrice ma sempre pentente — ha continuato a spargere sui piedi del Cristo.

E se qui è costretto — con vero intimo strazio — a condurne un duro giudizio, è solo perchè ha tanta fiducia in essa e anzi su di lei riposano le sue ultime speranze. Egli non ha fatto, nel suo passato — non senza troppa ingenuità e remissività — che lavorare per espanderla e glorificarla. E al presente egli sente — senza presunzione alcuna — di dover ancora agire per sollecitarla a riformarsi.

Il lettore, dunque, non troverà, nella rapida diagnosi che segue, indugi sulle tare e sulle debo-

lezze degli uomini che la rappresentano (sotto questo aspetto, chi, delle altre società o delle altre fedi, è senza peccato lanci la prima pietra); ma vedrà messi in rilievo e discussi onestamente e pacatamente mezzi, metodi e intenti che l'autore crede e tenterà di dimostrare difforni dall'ideale assegnatole da Cristo.

Quanto poi alla ricostruzione in spe della «vera» Chiesa che conclude il volume, essa non è altro che lo sviluppo dell'utopia evangelica non già adeguata ai tempi, ma redenta da tutte le violenze accaparratrici che i tempi vi hanno finora esercitato e proiettata in quel presente sempre eguale dell'eternità che è il privilegio accordato da Cristo alla sua Chiesa peregrinante nel mondo.

L'autore di queste pagine non intende quindi rivendicare polemicamente per la sua Chiesa ideale il solito vieto ritorno alle origini, ma quella costante e sostanziale fedeltà a se stessa che non può non essere per lei che condizione di vita e di fecondità.

L'ORGANISMO

Il problema della legittimità della Chiesa è, in fondo, un problema futile. Ma non tanto perchè la sua realtà fisica e la sua presenza ormai inscongiurabili lo rendono superfluo, quanto perchè è decisamente ingenuo pensare che l'apparizione di Cristo dovesse concludersi altrimenti che con l'instaurazione d'un movimento religioso il quale non si fossilizzasse ben presto in un organismo più o meno burocratico.

Gli ideali universalistici di cui già fermentava il mondo pagano prima dell'era cristiana e la cui prorompente espansione accompagnò stranamente il nascere e il diffondersi dalla Palestina del nuovo credo, non potevano ormai più essere trattenuti nelle vecchie forme organizzative che avevano sino allora ospitato e favorito il progresso del consorzio civile. In realtà, se la stessa idea universalista romana non si distingueva essenzialmente da quella di dominazione per conquista degli antichi imperi orientali, e se il concetto della *pax romana* non era altro che la sublimazione e in un certo senso la giustificazione degli istinti di preda che avevano caratterizzato ogni popolo entrato nella luce della

civiltà — dapprima le esigenze immanenti alla concezione giuridica, che accompagnò e promosse l'espandersi della politica imperialistica — poi l'influenza dello stoicismo greco che era stato condotto dalla sua concezione panteistica dell'universo ad una valutazione più profonda della persona umana e alla comprensione, logicamente connessa, della parità essenziale tra persona e persona, al di là di ogni classificazione sociale nazionale o razzistica — e la spinta mistica operata dal neoplatonismo, finirono per mettere in crisi il vecchio sistema statuale già minato del resto da altre forze e fattori sul terreno della sua stabilità economico-amministrativo-politica.

Lo stesso caos religioso del mondo antico, ridotto sotto l'impero a un pantheon politico di alleanze, senza più alcuna efficacia di suggestione sulle intelligenze scaltrite delle classi dirigenti, e denunciato nella sua ridicola inconsistenza, anche presso le masse, dalla sofferta serietà degli aneliti dei culti misteriosofici, attendeva l'audace rovesciatore di tutti i suoi idoli e l'instaurazione d'una fede veramente spirituale e universale.

Ma soprattutto lo stesso Cristo non poteva, nella sua straordinaria vegganza, non prevedere la Chiesa e, in un certo senso, non temerla. Anche se i Vangeli, sorti già dopo la costituzione di essa e anzi nel suo stesso ambito, gravano troppo in questo senso — ed è ovvio — le preoccupazioni del Maestro, non c'è alcun dubbio che il miglior mezzo ch'egli avesse per difendersi dalla Chiesa era quello di fondarne lui stesso una, la meno esiziale possibile al suo messaggio. D'accordo « che il sen-

so comune direbbe che degli entusiasti, che si riuniscono solo attraverso il loro comune entusiasmo per un capo che amavano, non si precipiterebbero a deliberare cose da lui odiate ». Nella soffitta della Pentecoste non fu infatti consumato nessun tradimento da parte dei Dodici contro il loro Maestro (sebbene sia proprio l'amore, in simili casi, a giocare i peggiori scherzi, e la storia d'ogni sodalizio sorto dalle ceneri d'un grande lo testimonia), ma ciò avvenne soltanto perchè Cristo stesso s'era impegnato, nei limiti del possibile (anche Dio ha i suoi limiti: le libere volontà degli uomini!), a precedere i loro disegni.

Non c'è dubbio, insomma, che Cristo volle una Chiesa. Ma il dubbio più legittimo (e quale dubbio) incomincia proprio quando ci si chiede se è veramente questa la Chiesa da lui voluta. Niente di più facile, infatti, che gli uomini, anche meglio intenzionati e più zelanti in fedeltà, abbiano inconsciamente attraversato, paralizzato o fuorviato i suoi disegni. E a chi legge senza preconcetti i Vangeli tale dubbio finisce per imporsi come una certezza. La Chiesa nell'ideale di Cristo doveva soprattutto essere un'atmosfera spirituale di riconosciuta fratellanza umana sotto gli occhi del Padre celeste; un bisogno e insieme un'esperienza di comunione amorosa e religiosa del suo complesso; e naturalmente anche una comunità con le sue guide morali, le sue norme, i suoi riti, ma in una sconfinata latitudine di libertà e di originalità sotto il soffio dello Spirito Santo. E come la prima comunità dei figli di Dio aveva vissuto unita a Lui sotto l'aperto cielo di Palestina, fuori di qualunque norma statu-

taria, assolutamente estranea (e pur, nel viver civile, puntualmente sottomessa e cooperante alla legittima autorità) a compromessi profani, politici o d'altro tenore, così le successive avrebbero dovuto continuare a trovare in Lui e in Lui solo il perno vivente e la forza propulsiva per vigoreggia-re ed espandersi.

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C'è nell'odierna teologia, una sottile e feconda distinzione (agevolissima, naturalmente, a prestarsi ai cavilli e alle scappatoie) a proposito appunto della Chiesa: quella tra la sua « anima » e il suo « corpo ». La prima sarebbe il suo elemento spirituale, svincolato, per così dire, da tutte le sue concretizzazioni e incrostazioni terrene; il secondo, invece, il complesso della sua armatura fisica, necessario per rendersi sensibile e distinguersi tra tutte le altre organizzazioni e società similari di quaggiù. Ebbene, una legge fatale alla Chiesa come a tutte le altre forme associative terrene ha fatto sì che il suo progresso materiale imponesse un sempre più oneroso e impacciante affardellamento alle sue spalle e ne dissecasse progressivamente ma inesorabilmente lo spirito in un burocratismo imponente certo, ma affatto evangelico.

Conosciamo già i motivi lirico-patetici che l'apologetica spicciola è pronta a manovrare contro questa nostra osservazione. Che la Chiesa, cioè, come nessun altro regno e impero, ha dalla sua duemila anni di storia; che è sopravvissuta non solo alla guerra ma alla pace; non solo alle sue stesse debolezze, ma persino alle sue rese; ch'essa è più

che mai giovane nella sua virile maturità. Tutto ciò, in fondo, non fa difficoltà alla nostra osservazione. E, del resto, poteva accadere diversamente? Una religione non è un regime politico, legato, nei suoi successi come nelle sue crisi e nelle sue disfatte, a fattori temporali economici sentimentali, tutti estremamente mutevoli; una religione è ancorata alle aspirazioni e ai valori eterni e trascendenti, a quello cioè che è naturalmente superstite anche nei più rovinosi crolli delle civiltà terrene e a cui anzi, quand'essi si producono, l'uomo ancor più fanaticamente si abbarbica. E che così sia lo provano le età di tutte le religioni, tra cui il cristianesimo, e non è certo colpa sua, non ha senz'altro il primato della longevità massima.

E ammettiamo anche i ben più gravi pericoli interni delle eresie e degli scismi, corsi dalla Chiesa nella sua lunga storia. Chesterton ha scritto immaginificamente a proposito: « Quando la fede emerse nel mondo, come primissima cosa le capitò di esser presa in una specie di turbine di sette mistiche e metafisiche, principalmente orientali, come una sola ape dorata colta in uno sciame di vespe. Un comune osservatore poteva non trovarci gran differenza, niente più che un ronzio generale: e infatti non c'era differenza, in quanto riguardasse i pungiglioni e le punture. La differenza era questa: che solo l'insetto d'oro in tutta quella polvere roteante ebbe la forza di procedere e fare alveari per l'umanità, di dare al mondo il miele e la cera... » ⁽¹⁾. Suggestivissimo paragone, ma a cui man-

(¹) Ne *L'uomo eterno*.

ca soltanto di riflettere l'autentica realtà storica. Giacchè molto più vero (ma a che pro allora usarlo?) sarebbe stato il dire che quello sciame di vespe non s'avventò affatto, poco gloriosamente, contro una fragile e solitaria ape d'oro, bensì ardì di molestare la tranquilla crescita d'un aquilotto già provato al volo. E in realtà le crisi più gravi furono attraversate dalla Chiesa al momento delle invasioni barbariche, nei secoli di ferro e allo scoppio della Riforma. Ma nel primo e nell'ultimo caso essa fu salvata dalle particolari situazioni politiche; nel secondo dai suoi stessi fedeli sollevatisi contro l'ignominia della Curia simoniaca e sodomitica. Nella storia non ci sono miracoli: c'è, tutt'al più, e possiamo umilmente accordarlo tutti, la nostra ignoranza a calcolare le componenti delle forze che vi agiscono. E, in questo senso, il metro del miracolo vale anche per gli eventi profani; ma allora, evidentemente, non si tratta più di miracolo vero e proprio. E l'appigliarvisi non è il ritrovato apologetico più consigliabile.

Ma agli apologeti professionali avviene spesso, e lo diciamo senza avanzar dubbi sulla loro buona fede, di confondere le entità che intendono difendere. Così, affermazioni come le seguenti: « il cristianesimo è morto più volte ed è sempre risorto, perchè aveva un Dio che sapeva la strada per uscire dal sepolcro », « il cristianesimo sarebbe perito se fosse stato perituro. Tutto quello che c'era di perituro cadeva », « l'Europa è stata messa più volte sottosopra, e alla fine di ognuno di questi capovolgimenti la religione si è sempre ritrovata sulla cima. La fede ha convertito tutte le epoche, non

come religione vecchia ma come religione nuova »⁽¹⁾ — essi le considerano valide per testimoniare la perennità e l'inconsutile giovinezza della Chiesa cattolica. Mentre, evidentemente, quel che ha dimostrato è proprio questa identità tra Cristianesimo e Chiesa cattolica.

Noi, comunque, non vogliamo qui sostenere che a Chiesa cattolica non sia la Chiesa che Cristo ha fondato o che essa abbia sostanzialmente aberrato dall'ideale del suo Fondatore. Noi sosteniamo soltanto che lo ha dolorosamente sfigurato e compromesso attraverso un processo febbrale e inconsulto di burocratizzazione. E in questo senso la nostra critica non si volge molto a ritroso nel tempo, ma si limita soprattutto all'ultimo secolo.

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La Chiesa, è ovvio, fu sempre, più o meno, un complesso elefantico di competenze e di dicasteri. E in essa, si assommò spesso, proprio per quel prevalere d'interessi tecnici e materiali, la corruzione più classica. Ma il fatto che, sino al 1870, sia sempre stata la centrale politica di un vero e proprio stato, giovò indubbiamente alla laterale missione religiosa che pur entrava nelle sue competenze. Infatti, se nei momenti d'invasamento politico essa dimenticava il suo compito essenziale e lo subordinava, pur sciorinandolo come la ragione del proprio essere e del proprio agire, ai suoi successi temporali, lo Spirito aveva campo libero di spaziare e d'influire sulle membra in cui sponta-

⁽¹⁾ Op. cit.

neamente veniva a rifluire l'ardore reale della passione religiosa che abbandonavano il capo. Il Baudrillard ha detto che « nella Chiesa cattolica, come ovunque, le riforme sono l'opera di pochi individui che le vogliono energicamente e finiscono per imporre all'opinione e agli organi regolari della gerarchia ». Ciò che è stato vero indubbiamente sino a un secolo fa, quando la « base », per usare un termine di moda felicemente espressivo, godeva d'una certa indipendenza di fatto, ma che è molto meno vero oggi che la burocrazia della Chiesa non agisce più tanto sul temporale quanto sullo spirituale. È una verità storica indeclinabile quella che tutte le riforme sono state assunte dalla Curia soltanto dopo esser matureate alla periferia e spesso (come al tempo della Controriforma) con un ritardo fatale. Ma ieri potevano almeno nascere e degenerare persino per... troppa maturazione: oggi sono sorvegliate *in vitro* ancora allo stato embrionale e quasi sempre o avocate agli « organi competenti » (che le archiviano o le addomesticano) o radiate prima che possano destare preoccupazioni.

Persino alcuni famosi laici condussero nell'800 la polemica contro lo stato temporale della Chiesa insinuando sottili argomenti in favore della sua necessaria e benefica spiritualizzazione. Ma nessuno forse, neppure dei più ostili alla Chiesa, previde di inferire in tal modo un colpo tanto grave alla sua nemica. Essi anzi si morsero dal dispetto vedendola uscire apparentemente ancor più forte e vigorosa dalla violenza spogliatrice che avevano abbattuto su di lei. Era troppo presto, infatti, perché potessero assistere alle conseguenze della loro azio-

ne. Le persecuzioni e i pesanti protezionismi collaborarono insieme, senza volerlo, a unirla e a cementarla sempre più. Osteggiato dai governi liberali e imbrigliato da quelli conservatori, l'episcopato, già ammaestrato dal salasso di sangue del Terrore e dalla cinica prepotenza napoleonica, abbandonò tutti i frondismi e rinunciò a tutti i « gallicanesimi » particolaristici e nazionalistici, cospirando sempre più decisamente verso Roma, divenuta più che mai, dopo l'oltraggio a Pio VII, non solo « segno di contraddizione » ma anche segnacolo di coalizione, quale unica patria superstite della Fede. L'entrata nella Città Eterna delle truppe italiane coronò l'opera stimolatrice creando il mito del papa martire e prigioniero. La prima risposta degli offesi fu il Concilio Vaticano e la ratifica del dogma dell'infallibilità pontificia, poi il culto idolatrico di Leone XIII, elargito in seguito anche a tutti i suoi successori. Sconfitta sul piano politico, ma sempre incrollabile nella sua sdegnata attesa di adeguati risarcimenti, la Curia romana si preparò insomma a stravincere su quello interno, più apparentemente spirituale, sicura che un rinsaldamento di tutta la sua compagine non avrebbe mancato, poco alla volta, di influire anche sul suo diminuito prestigio mondano. E dal '70 al '39, infatti, fu, per la Curia, tutto un periodo di febbrile lavoro d'accenramento e d'organizzazione dal settore teologico a quello liturgico, dal sociale al politico, dal giuridico al culturale; il periodo, cioè, delle encicliche leonine (dalla *Rerum Novarum* alla *Divino afflante*), delle dispotiche riforme del mite Pio X (docilmente succube al fiero Merry del

Val, sia nell'ostentato isolamento diplomatico (nella drastica reazione antimodernistica), del *Codex Juris Canonici* di Benedetto XV, e del pontificato diplomatico (il pontificato classico dei concordati), missionario (con le avanguardie missionarie all'estero e l'Azione Cattolica all'interno) e culturalmente mecenatizio (dalla riforma degli studi teologici alla fondazione dell'Accademia delle Scienze) di Pio XI. Sforzo senza dubbio notevolissimo, cui doveva porre il fastigio l'ambigua e sgusciante diplomazia dell'attuale Pontefice, detto... l'Angelico!

L'anno giubilare del mezzo Novecento toccò il culmine degli eccessi curiali in un'atmosfera di euforia che raramente nella storia della Chiesa ebbe momenti d'altrettanta illusa ed enfatica millantazione. Tuttavia il frastuono degli applausi non è riuscito a far tacere dalla « base » le voci sempre più numerose e persistenti, auspicanti fondamentali riforme e sostanziali revisionamenti. Il portato, infatti, della politica ecclesiastica interna di questo ultimo cinquantennio — impostata eminentemente su principi del più vieto conservatorismo — è stato sì un potenziamento della burocrazia vaticana con relative bonifiche periferiche, ma contemporaneamente un ristagno su posizioni superate, risultate sempre più insostenibili coll'evoluzione esterna della società. Ma soprattutto quella politica ha finito per fare della Chiesa una enorme macchina podagrosa troppo simile, nella sua raffinata complessità, a tutti i più solenni monumenti storici di cui lo studioso a un sol colpo d'occhio riconosce l'ormai inarrestabile faticenza. Forse, all'interno, pochi dei molti scontenti hanno il senso della gravissima

fisi in atto nella Chiesa. La loro stessa fede nella promessa d'indifettibilità fatta dal Cristo finisce per far loro ritenere una colpa l'inquietudine e l'impazienza da cui pur si sentono posseduti, e tergiversano tra la recriminazione e l'azione, preferendo poi sostare nella prima, sapendo per esperienza quanto la seconda sia pericolosa e, alla fine, inutile. Niente d'altra parte come questa perplessità e questo pratico rinunciarismo manifestano a che punto morto sian costrette le stesse intelligenze più aperte e le volontà più decisive. D'accordo che la Chiesa non morrà. Il Cristianesimo, anche per non credenti, è il massimo lievito di certezze morali che l'umanità abbia estratto dalla sua esperienza millennaria e l'istituzione che ne è stata la depositaria storica non sarà tanto facilmente reputata dalla società. Ma il suo destino non dovrebbe essere certo quello di lasciarsi visitare e onorare come un museo, bensì di agire come la prima forza determinante del progresso *interiore* dell'uomo e della civiltà.

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Comunque, quando noi indichiamo nell'elefantiasi della burocrazia lo svilimento più grave dell'ideale di Cristo a proposito della sua Chiesa, non intendiamo tanto riferirci alla complessità dei ministeri e degli uffici curiali quanto al fenomeno che li ha fatti sorgere e soprattutto allo spirito che li informa. Undici Congregazioni, tre Tribunali e sei Uffici (¹) non sono poi un apparato così pachi-

(¹) Le *Sacre Congregazioni* sono le seguenti: Suprema del S. Offizio, Concistoriale, per la Chiesa Orientale, dei

dermico e schiacciante per un organismo centrale che ha ramificazioni su tutti i continenti ed amministra ben 400 milioni di fedeli. Ma questi venti dicasteri si rivelano in tutt'altra luce non appena li si osservi nella loro inesorabilità accentratrice e nella loro mentalità inficiata del più ottuso legalismo e conservatorismo. Non è il caso di anticipare qui nessuno degli appunti che denunceremo d'argomento in argomento toccando dei vari membri e delle varie attività. Qui ci limitiamo ad un rilievo relativo alla classe burocratica su cui fa leva la Curia Romana: una classe che ha certo conosciuto benemerenze e glorie, e che ha indubbiamente annoverato personalità storiche; ma anche una classe ormai notevolmente spremuta e sclerotica, oltre che di orizzonti estremamente conclusi. Solo in teoria, infatti, le Congregazioni dipendono dalle Commissioni cardinalizie: in effetti esse basano soprattutto sui « consultori » e sugli « ufficiali », più sui secondi anzi che sui primi. Ora costoro (i veri elementi stabili della burocrazia ecclesiastica) sono reclutati (il come o le influenze qui non ci interessano) quasi esclusivamente dal seno del clero romano o, al più, italiano. Ciò che non è tanto ingiusto quanto improvvviso. Perchè il vero cattolicesimo della Chiesa non dovrebbe essere un

Sacramenti, del Concilio, dei Religiosi, de Propaganda Fide, dei Riti, Ceremoniale, degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, dei Seminari e delle Università degli Studi, della Rev. Fabbrica di S. Pietro. — I *Tribunali*: Penitenzieria Apostolica, Supremo Tribunale della Penitenzieria Apostolica, Sacra Romana Rota. — Gli *Uffici*: Cancelleria Apostolica; Dataria Apostolica, Rev. Camera Apostolica, Segreteria di Stato, Segreteria dei Brevi ai Principi, Segreteria delle Lettere Latine.

simplice folklore della « base », ma esprimersi simultaneamente dal suo corpo dirigente e attraverso la mentalità direttrice della sua amministrazione. È assolutamente assurdo pensare che poche centinaia di officiali curiali, sprovvisti o quasi d'ogni conoscenza delle esigenze dei paesi ch'essi amministrano (con la più impossibile applicazione meccanica della legge), spesso ignorandone la lingua, la geografia e la storia, e per di più cullati negliigi di una vita blandamente impiegatizia a orario ridottissimo, debbano essere i responsabili del passo che il cattolicesimo tiene nel mondo. Chi opponesse che tra i « consultori », se non altro, il carattere internazionale della Chiesa è più rispettato, non direbbe che una cosa parzialmente vera, perchè, anzitutto, anche i « consultori » non italiani non sono mai la maggioranza e in ogni caso sono quasi esclusivamente dei religiosi, (e perciò superficialmente radicati nelle tradizioni dei loro stessi paesi) e da anni ordinari nelle università teologiche romane (e quindi già ambientalmente filtrati e neutralizzati). Quanto ai Cardinali, è vero che oggi quasi la metà del collegio è formata da non italiani, ma solo una minoranza di costoro risiede a Roma, così che la Curia praticamente è sotto l'influsso esclusivo delle porpore italiane. Quando poi si pensa che è questa stessa Curia la quale, attraverso la Congregazione Concistoriale e quella De Propaganda Fide, nomina i vescovi e gli arcivescovi del mondo intero, si può comprendere con quali criteri ciò avvenga.

Il discorso d'una urgente epurazione dei dicasteri ecclesiastici dai molti elementi, i quali non servono che di trampolino per le loro ambizioni

personalì, è evidentemente tutt'altro e non investe che un problema di degnità e di pulizia interna di ordinaria amministrazione. Basterebbe non chiamare al posto d'ufficiale curiale giovani sacerdoti cui la ruggine burocratica non tarderà a intanare ogni entusiasmo sacro sostituendolo con la più sterile e disseccante cupidigia di onori, ma esclusivamente sacerdoti dal maturo senso pratico, già esperimentati al ministero e provatamente alieni da cupidigie del genere, per immettere aria nuova e rarefatta in ambienti notoriamente piuttosto asfittici. Questo comunque è un problema secondario in confronto al primo essenzialmente strutturale. La riforma del progetto non può essere posticipata alla costruzione dell'edificio. L'universalizzazione della Curia sbloccherebbe infatti il cattolicesimo da una notevole parte di quei feticci tradizionalistici che lo avvilscono e dinamizzerebbe incomparabilmente la sua azione sinora inceppata dal ciarpame di troppe mummie conservatrici.

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Non ci si deve faintendere. Per noi il pericolo di stasi non deriva alla Chiesa dal semplice fatto ch'essa è irrigidita in un complicato sistema burocratico. Nessuno che accetti seriamente la Chiesa può immaginarla come una semplice realtà mistica o una rarefatta comunità di puri spiriti. Concesso, come non si può non concedere, ch'essa debba pur avere un minimo di fisicità, non si può ammettere che la Chiesa di Pio XII si affidi a strutture simili a quelle che contraddistinguevano la Chiesa di Simon Pietro, il primo papa. A parer nostro, anzi,

la burocrazia della Chiesa dovrebbe, per qualche lato, svilupparsi anche di più (¹) (e atrofizzarsi per qualche altro). L'apparato burocratico è necessario anche alla Chiesa; ma tutt'altro che necessario è invece lo spirito burocratico di accentramento e di dittatorialità che lo anima: lo spirito cioè della supremazia senza appello della burocrazia sulla stessa vita carismatica della Chiesa; come se soltanto quello che passa attraverso il filtro della burocrazia avesse diritto di cittadinanza nella Città di Dio e tutto il resto fosse da sospettarsi e ripudiarsi.

(¹) Manca, ad esempio, un sia pur rudimentale Centro delle attività dei cattolici nei vari paesi e nei diversi settori.

LA GERARCHIA

Dopo che alla burocrazia della Chiesa, gli appunti più gravi vanno senza dubbio mossi alla sua gerarchia. In fondo, anzi, questa non è che una emanazione e una creatura di quella. E fatalmente finisce per ripeterne la grettezza, l'aridità e la ristrettezza delle vedute.

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Certo, anche Cristo, pensando alla Chiesa, pensò a una gerarchia. I Vangeli e gli *Atti degli Apostoli* lo attestano inconfutabilmente. Quello anzi che più impressiona, riflettendo al tempo della loro redazione (a pochi decenni, cioè, dalla morte di Gesù, quando in effetti lo spicco di Pietro sugli altri Dieci era piuttosto relativo) è il deciso — anche se più implicito che formale — riconoscimento del cosiddetto *primato* di Pietro. Sull'interpretazione della sua portata giuridica è inutile discutere: si trattasse di ermeneutica a un testo protocollare ci sarebbe per lo meno qualche speranza di riuscire a una tesi conciliante: ma pochi versetti, e complicati, per di più, da allegorie orientali, costringeranno eternamente a un risultato fluido e a un dibattito personalissimo. Il contesto, comunque, im-

pone che si debba accettare non solo
riconoscimento d'autorità a Pietro, ma che lo si
riconosca anche ai suoi successori. E giustamente.
Un'oligarchia al sommo fastigio della Chiesa avre-
bbe avuto un significato troppo banalmente burocrati-
co e non avrebbe mancato di lasciar dubbi sulla
sua omogeneità ed umanità. Un capo unico sarebbe
invece riuscito davvero quello che Soloviev chiamò
« l'icone miracolosa del Cristianesimo universale »,
cioè il simbolo più adeguato dell'unità, dell'immu-
tabilità, del progresso della Chiesa, oltre che della
sua indipendenza di fronte ai poteri civili e della
sua fecondità e capacità di recupero.

Ma dal pescatore di Cafarnao all'attuale Pontefice Massimo quale distanza! Aprendo un *Annuario Pontificio*, le pagine dedicate al semplice elenco dei membri della Corte Pontificia lasciano veramente sbalorditi. Ecco, ad esempio, quello della *Famiglia della Santità di Nostro Signore* (per tacere dell'altro della cosiddetta *Cappella Pontificia*): « Cardinali palatini - Nobile anticamera segreta - Prelati palatini - Gran Maestro del S. Ospizio - Camerieri segreti di cappa e spada partecipanti - Prelati domestici - Guardie nobili pontificie - Collegio dei Maestri delle Cerimonie pontificie - Camerieri segreti soprannumerari - Camerieri segreti di cappa e spada di numero e soprannumerari - Camerieri d'onore in abito paonazzo - Camerieri d'onore extra Urbem - Camerieri d'onore di cappa e spada di numero e soprannumero - Stato maggiore della Guardia Svizzera pontificia, della Guardia Palatina d'onore e della Gendarmeria pontificia - Cappellani segreti e cappellani segreti d'onore - Cappellani

'onore *extra Urbem* - Chierici segreti - Collegio ei cappellani comuni Bussolanti ».

Decisamente: è un po' troppo. Se il cristianesimo ha tratto origine dall'Oriente, non è però nato in una corte e sarebbe ben triste che l'ultimo papa morisse, sia pure alla fine del mondo, in un fasto del genere. D'accordo che i tempi hanno portato a ei non desiderabili compromessi, ma la scusa per perpetuare un simile folklore non ha più giustificazioni ormai. E, se si insiste, non v'è dubbio che tutto ciò è in armonia con un autentico culto le cui compiacenze servili non si fermano certo ai flâelli e al bacio del piede. Nessuno, naturalmente, pretende che il Papa vesta in *tight* e in cilindro. Il rappresentante supremo d'un culto religioso, che aduna quasi 400 milioni d'uomini, ha tutto il diritto di vivere avvolto in un nimbo particolare di devozione e di amore. Ma ogni eccesso dovrebbe essere scrupolosamente eliminato e soprattutto nessuna forma di cortigianeria dovrebbe mai essere sopportata. Spessissimo invece gli scritti e i discorsi dei più qualificati cattolici (non parliamo dei dignitari ecclesiastici e del clero in genere) — dal tono strisciante dei cronisti de *L'Osservatore Romano* all'enfasi dei biografi e dei panegiristi — non ne sono che repugnanti esemplari. (E che dire di certe grossolane montature, come quella del genio oratorio dell'attuale pontefice, che tutto sarà ma non certo un felice oratore?) La dignità di Vicario di Cristo e la persona che ne è temporaneamente rivestita dovrebbero esser tenute nettamente distinte e quest'ultima passare in ogni caso in netto sott'ordine di fronte alla prima.

Senza dire che l'etichetta e la grammatica investono talora persino atti del magistero supremo infirmandone l'efficacia e la risonanza. Si pensi alle vettissime forme con cui sono tutt'oggi redatte le encicliche papali. A parte le proporzioni, talvolta giustificate, la loro sterile ambizione di « *summae* » ricapitolatrici *ab ovo* della questione in esame, la loro enfasi retorica, e insieme la loro freddezza di esposizione, i geroglifici tomistici che complicano le involuzioni stilistiche, la loro astrattezza, ecc. impongono il risultato fatale della loro inaccessibilità. Solo qualche documento, in una marea di scritti del genere, si salva di quando in quando, o per la sua eccezionale importanza o per ragioni contingenti; ma di nessuno mai si può parlare di popolarità (che, semmai, non va al di là del titolo).

Ma il male scava anche più in profondità. La presenza simbolica del Cristo nell'umanità, quale è realizzata dal Pontefice da Roma, si è trasformata a poco a poco, ma ormai irrimediabilmente (e il caso del mite Pio X praticamente esautorato dal suo autoritario segretario di Stato lo prova), da presenza ministeriale e pastorale in autorità eminentemente egemonica e totalitaria. E il suo infallibilismo non è più ormai concluso alle pure questioni di fede e di morale, ma si esercita di fatto altrettanto prepotentemente e indiscriminatamente in ogni campo, politico, culturale, pedagogico, ecc. L'unica libertà superstite ai fedeli è quella di acconsentire e obbedire.

Il massimo dell'arbitrio si esercita, evidentemente, nel settore religioso. A dire il vero, nel '70 la contrastatissima definizione dell'infalibilità pon-

tifica non preoccupò gran che la maggior parte dei teologi, che vi aveva acconsentito, per il fatto che ormai verità da trarre in dogmi non ce n'era molte all'orizzonte e nessuno dubitava che si sarebbe proceduto in ogni caso per via conciliare. Invece, il dogma dell'Assunta passò senza la convocazione di nessun Concilio (nè v'è alcun dubbio che, *rebus sic stantibus*, nessun eventuale concilio troverà più atmosfere tanto surriscaldate e bellicose — perchè libere — come quella del Concilio Vaticano, dato il progressivo addomesticamento delle menti e delle coscienze!). Peggio, sembra che ormai lo stesso ricorso alle definizioni sia un lusso e che la libertà di pensiero nelle varie discipline teologiche debba fermarsi molto prima. Secondo Pio XII, nella recentissima *Humani generis*, infatti: « ...certuni vanno dicendo che i Pontefici non intendono dare un giudizio sulle questioni che sono oggetto di disputa tra i teologi; e che è quindi necessario ritornare alle fonti primitive e spiegare con gli scritti degli antichi le costituzioni e i decreti del magistero.

« Queste affermazioni — commenta ironicamente il Papa — vengono fatte forse con eleganza di stile; però esse non mancano di falsità. Infatti è vero che generalmente i pontefici lasciano liberi i teologi in quelle questioni che, in vario senso, sono soggette a discussioni fra i dotti di miglior fama; però la storia insegna che parecchie questioni che prima erano oggetto di libera disputa, in seguito non potevano più essere discusse.

« Nè si deve ritenere che gli insegnamenti delle Encicliche non richiedano per sè il nostro assenso

col pretesto che i Pontefici non vi esercitano il potere del loro Magistero Supremo.

« Infatti questi insegnamenti sono del Magistero Ordinario di cui valgono pure le parole: « Chi ascolta voi ascolta me »; e per lo più quanto viene proposto e inculcato nelle Encicliche è già, per altre ragioni, patrimonio della dottrina cattolica. Che se, poi, i Sommi Pontefici nei loro atti emanano di proposito una sentenza in materia finora controversa, è evidente per tutti che tale questione, secondo l'intenzione e la volontà degli stessi Pontefici, non può più costituire oggetto di libera discussione tra i teologi ».

Sembrerebbe impensabile, ma la stessa intransigenza ricorre in materia assai dubbiamente disciplinare, quale la politica. Gli scacchi che, ad esempio, hanno punteggiato drammaticamente le direttive impartite ai cattolici italiani da Pio IX sino a Pio X sembrano non aver insegnato nulla. Non solo non è lecito sostenere in sede storica (e provi a farlo un docente di storia ecclesiastica nei seminari!) la sconsideratezza delle misure pontificie che tolsero ai cattolici italiani qualsiasi influenza politica sociale e morale nel loro paese per quasi un cinquantennio — ma bisogna sostenere il contrario, inculcando che una cieca obbedienza alle direttive della S. Sede è sempre opportuna e provvidenziale. In parole povere, anche in politica « il Papa ha sempre ragione ». Ma questo, della Chiesa e della politica, è un argomento che dovremo sviluppare più avanti.

Una critica adeguata alla posizione di integrale assolutismo quale è riservata al Pontefice nella Chie-

sare, con cui gerebbe una discussione completa degli articoli del Diritto Canonico che la codificano. Ma ai nostri scopi è sufficiente il già accennato.

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Quanto al *senato della Chiesa*, basti dire ch'esso è meramente decorativo e funzionalmente inefficiente a tutti gli effetti. Risiedendo i due terzi dei suoi membri fuori Roma, i pochi cardinali di Curia o vescovi delle diocesi suburbicarie (ma naturalmente residenti a Roma) smistano con parsimoniose deliberazioni il lavoro dei rispettivi dicasteri dividendo il resto del loro tempo a condecorare « con lo splendore della sacra porpora » ora un ricevimento diplomatico ora una conferenza ora una delle innumerose funzioni che le Chiese di Roma non si stancano di riproporre ai loro scarsi fedeli. Una modestamente onorifica e agiata vita da pensionati, insomma, che rompe il grigiore servile delle preettate prestazioni di corte con qualche estemporanea ma lusingante missione legatizia in Italia o all'estero. Niente, come si vede, di più innocuo.

I privilegi di Curia esigevano sino a pochi anni fa che l'individuo salito per tutti i gradini del suo ministero coronasse le sue fortune di carriera (spesso dovute a morti provvidenziali) col trofeo del cappello cardinalizio. A questo metodo, oltre che al « nepotismo » dei pontefici (particolarmente spiccato quello di Pio XI), si dovevano, e in parte si devono, le presenze più assurde di certi mediocritissimi *parvenus* tra le massime dignità della Chiesa. Fortunatamente Pio XII ebbe il coraggio di spezzare questa dannosissima tradizione apprendo mag-

giornemente l'ingresso al cardinalato — italiano il popolo clericale pastorale, facilitato dall'intento di ~~una~~ anche internazionalisticamente il reclutamento dei senatori ecclesiastici. Rimane la piaga del nepotismo (non più, s'intende, almeno in questo settore, in senso stretto), ma quella è inerente alla papocrazia e quindi insanabile.

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Il vero peso del reggimento della Chiesa nelle sue innumerevoli circoscrizioni si addossa, invece, sulle spalle dei *Vescovi*. E bisogna riconoscere che l'episcopato cattolico è, nel complesso — in Italia certo meno che altrove, ma per ovvie ragioni⁽¹⁾ — la forza qualitativamente più cospicua di cui possa andar fiera la Chiesa romana. Non che non abbia anch'esso le sue ombre e le sue macchie (membri «inutili» e talora persino nocivi, tra cui non pochi transfughi, come nei paesi d'oltre cortina) o che sia in ogni individuo egualmente eccellente e rappresentativo; ma, come *corpus*, è senz'altro una realtà imponente e formidabile, tale, anzi, da non temer confronti con quello di nessun'altra confessione o religione.

La scelta dei suoi membri, a parte i soliti favoritismi e le solite camarille da cui non si salverà mai alcuna associazione umana, è condotta, in ge-

(1) I Vescovi residenziali (o diocesani) in Italia sono oltre trecento, cioè quasi quanto quelli di tutta l'Europa messi insieme. Le tradizioni storiche hanno certo un peso, ma non tale però da giustificare un pastore per ogni campanile (le diocesi che contano dalle 10 alle 50 parrocchie — comprese, s'intende, quelle del capoluogo — non si contano).

a cattolica esieri di rigida e illuminata selezione. L'altro giova allo scopo il numero limitato delle sedi residenziali dei vari paesi, il quale obbliga quasi fatalmente all'elezione dei candidati più idonei e preparati. Forse sarebbe ideale una più frequente rotazione dei soggetti nelle varie diocesi, ma soprattutto dovrebbe essere attuato un tempestivo rinnovamento « per raggiunti limiti di età ». In epoche patriarcali o quasi, come le antiche, era più che naturale cercare nella esperienza e nella saggezza degli anni i pastori delle diocesi; ma in un'epoca dinamica come l'attuale, con un ritmo di lavoro che consuma anche le costituzioni più robuste, un vescovo non è più efficiente, generalmente, dopo i 65 anni e sarebbe opportunissimamente sostituito (la soluzione dei vescovi coadiutori è risultata fallimentare nella più parte dei casi) da un successore più giovane e altrettanto dotato. Senza dire che l'adeguamento ai tempi richiede una mentalità tutt'altro che preformata o pregiudizialmente avversa a novità metodiche o ideologiche.

Infine, è da deplorare che l'episcopato cattolico viva in uno stato di isolamento nazionale, quando non regionalistico, assolutamente negativo ai fini dell'apostolato. Se c'è una lezione ch'esso dovrebbe raccogliere dai suoi antichi fratelli del II e III secolo è proprio quella delle frequenti visite ch'essi si facevano di sede in sede, di paese in paese, spesso da un capo all'altro dell'impero « per confortarsi nella fede », come usavan dire, e per discutere sulle esperienze dell'evangelizzazione e sui metodi da essa suggerite. Obiettare che oggi l'informazione per mezzo della stampa abolisce questa necessità

è puerile, perchè una constatazione *de visu* è di ben altra efficacia d'un semplice rapporto scritto (quando, ben inteso, è letto!). Incontri singoli o a gruppi, oltre che provocare il più opportuno ragguaglio ed aggiornamento, servirebbero a favorire maggiormente la conoscenza dei problemi morali, sociali e politici propri dei vari paesi e a impedire il ridicolo di prese di posizione dell'episcopato d'una nazione diametralmente opposte a quello d'un'altra a proposito dello stesso e identico problema. E ciò sarebbe tanto più utile e urgente in quanto i concili, dalla sospensione di quello Vaticano nel '70 per protesta dell'occupazione di Roma, sembrano ormai obliterati nella prassi della Chiesa. Forme sostanzialmente democratiche, esse fanno paura a un regime che proprio in questo ultimo secolo s'è sempre più andato assolutizzando. Più che naturale, quindi, che la Curia ne faccia volentieri a meno e preferisca i sinodi o le conferenze episcopali di cui del resto controlla oculatissimamente (tra l'altro con la presenza dei Nunzi) l'andamento, gli umori e i risultati.

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Alla parte discente e non alla docente, e quindi non alla gerarchia vera e propria appartengono i sacerdoti, sia secolari che religiosi, in quanto il loro ministero è partecipazione straordinaria e limitata a quello ordinario dei Vescovi. Tuttavia preferiamo accennarne qui, perchè in effetti essi esercitano nella Chiesa un magistero e una giurisdizione che li investe di funzioni autenticamente, per quanto subordinatamente, direttive.

Dei primi — e cioè dei *sacerdoti secolari* — abbiamo scritto sufficientemente in un altro volume li questa collezione e non val la pena di ripeterci. In genere, il clero si è molto migliorato da un secolo ad oggi, anche perchè si è molto assottigliato di numero. I fattori che hanno condotto a una riduzione all'estremo dei suoi membri sono molteplici: lalla diminuita fede delle masse al minacciato prestigio sociale e dalle deflazionate provvigioni economiche, di cui prima era gratificato, alle maggiori esigenze e alle più severe riforme imposte dall'autorità ecclesiastica. Tuttavia la sua preparazione nei seminari lascia ancor molto a desiderare perchè detta tuttora da pregiudizi impossibili contro i contatti più elementari con la vita che i futuri sacerdoti debbono necessariamente intrattenere prima di assumere la responsabilità delle rinunce che una missione come la loro impone. Ma anche la preparazione culturale, benchè molto migliorata nell'ultimo trentennio, avrebbe bisogno di importanti riforme, specialmente per quanto riguarda le scienze sacre. Anzitutto essa manca di organicità, ma anche più di vitalità. I trattati teologici continuano ad essere dei capitoli completamente conclusi e incomunicanti, i quali non legano tra loro che artificialmente, mancando di un unico punto focale da cui traggano ispirazione e calore comuni, e si giustappongono materialmente l'uno all'altro senza collegarsi osmoticamente con scambi vitali di umori: in una parola, si è ancora allo stadio della *encyclopedia* teologica e non alla sintesi. Ma l'aridità di questi trattati è anche più impressionante. Qualcuno ha definito la teologia come la progrediente illuminazione

battesimale dello Spirito nel credente. Ma nei manuali che passano per le mani degli studenti di teologia, sia dei corsi normali che delle facoltà, altro che ventate pentecostali!: tutto è freddo rigido e inerte. Il raziocinio cavilla e sillogizza sino alla vertigine, la documentazione storica si stratifica come un magma raffreddato e pietrificato, l'ermeneutica biblica seziona con affilatissime cesoie e tratta con sottilissimi specilli i testi più incandescenti della Sacra Scrittura, l'erudizione disarticola e stralciata inanimate prede di brani patristici; il tutto in un invariante succedersi di tesi dimostrate *per partes*, che toglierebbero la vocazione e il diletto dello studio al discepolo più appassionato.

Le disfunzioni del sistema non cessano però quando il sacerdote è ormai ordinato. I criteri d'impiego dei vari soggetti sono spesso quanto mai incongrui ed assurdi. Molti vescovi non hanno ancora imparato dall'esperienza un fatto dei più ovvii: e cioè che un sacerdote spostato è quasi sempre un sacerdote perduto. La resa, infatti, è sempre proporzionale alle attitudini. Con la scusa della Grazia, si vuol prescindere dalla natura, e si finisce per distruggere inconsultamente tutt'e due. Certo ci sono anche le santità degli spostati; ma ci sono soprattutto le loro defezioni. Un intellettuale in cura d'anime, per esempio, sarà senza dubbio un intellettuale rovinato, ma non meno certamente un parroco fallito. E altrettanto un amante dell'apostolato ribadito a un'amministrazione curiale o a una cattedra d'insegnamento. Le specializzazioni nel clero sono ancora una conquista di là da venire. In qualche grande diocesi si sono eccezionalmente

staccati dei corpi speciali di sacerdoti per la propaganda dell'Azione Cattolica o per l'insegnamento catechistico nelle scuole e, ultimamente, per l'assistenza religiosa negli stabilimenti. Ma quasi in nessun paese (è evidente che questo non è un compito delle singole diocesi) si è ancor pensato, sull'esempio degli ordini religiosi, a costituire un nucleo di sacerdoti dediti alla stampa periodica o a vere e proprie attività di studio e di pubblicazioni letterario-scientifiche. I vescovi preferiscono « inventare » caso per caso i direttori di giornali e di riviste o lasciare che laici sprovveduti (anche se con le migliori intenzioni e con indubbie doti naturali, ma non specifiche) tengano barbaramente il monopolio della stessa cultura religiosa.

Un caso particolare di cattivo impiego degli elementi del clero è quello del massacro dei migliori. Basta che un sacerdote riveli spirto e doti non comuni che in breve, se non ha una salute altrettanto eccezionale, o anche se l'ha, sarà messo in condizioni di non nuocere. Soffocato d'incarichi, non solo non riuscirà a portarne il peso che con uno sforzo enorme d'energie, ma in breve avrà prosciugato tutte le sue riserve interiori e si sarà ridotto a uno strumento di terz'ordine.

Tuttavia la distribuzione dei sacerdoti secondo le necessità delle varie diocesi è un problema non meno grave ed urgente dei precedenti. Secondo il Diritto Canonico, l'incardinazione ribadisce giuridicamente il sacerdote alla fissità perpetua nella sua diocesi d'origine. Di conseguenza diocesi pletoriche di clero stanno gomito a gomito con altre punteggiate di parrocchie sguarnite di parroci e di seminari

sprovvisti d'insegnanti. Naturalmente, se c'è un esodo dalle prime alle seconde, non è certo degli elementi migliori, ma di coloro del cui allontanamento i vescovi non possono che godere. Alla povertà del clero le diocesi più sfortunate aggiungono così l'onata d'un clero infingardo o scandaloso. Ovviare a simili condizioni non è possibile che mediante commissioni episcopali presiedute dai rispettivi primati, le quali studino la distribuzione dei sacerdoti (e possibilmente, ancor prima, degli stessi seminaristi teologi) a seconda dei bisogni effettivi contemplati e risolti con preoccupazioni a carattere nazionale più ancora che regionale.

Dei *religiosi* si è occupato recentissimamente (26 nov. - 8 dic. 1950) un convegno promosso in Roma dalla stessa Congregazione dei Religiosi. L'avvenimento è riuscito molto sintomatico (specie per svelare lo spirito sabotatore della Curia nei riguardi dei movimenti di « base ») e val la pena di rievocarlo, anche se ciò rompe un poco la linea del nostro discorso. Per comprendere però l'ambiguo e abilissimo atteggiamento della Curia bisogna permettere qualche osservazione sull'attuale posizione degli ordini religiosi in seno alla Chiesa.

In passato, ogni autentica riforma fu sempre legata a un movimento di riscossa promosso dai fondatore d'ordini o dai loro seguaci. Da Benedetto di Norcia, appena dopo il tramonto dell'impero di occidente, a Gregorio di Soana e Pier Damiano nel sec. XI, a Francesco d'Assisi e Domenico di Guzman a Ignazio di Lojola e a tutta la pleiade dei fondatori delle prime congregazioni del '500, da Vincenzo de' Paoli, quasi alla vigilia della rivolu-

zione francese, sino a Don Bosco nel sec. XIX — per ricordare soltanto i nomi celebri e cari al cattolicesimo (ma quelli da esso anatemizzati non sono meno indicativi) — ogni tappa del cammino della Chiesa Romana è segnata dall'influsso prepotente e determinante degli ordini religiosi. Per più di dieci secoli dalla pace di Costantino, la Curia, invischiata negli interessi dello Stato pontificio e sempre più irretita e compromessa nel gioco diplomatico delle alleanze e delle leghe volta a volta difensive e aggressive, aveva abbandonato più che volentieri a queste forze neutre la rappresentanza dei suoi valori spirituali; tanto più che sul clero secolare, alto o basso che fosse, non poteva fare molto affidamento, ligio come era, sin dall'epoca delle investiture, ai poteri civili regionali e nazionali. Ma negli ultimi secoli, e soprattutto dopo la vittoria della borghesia, la laicizzazione degli stati e le lotte, quando non anche le persecuzioni, orientarono sempre più decisamente — come abbiam già detto — l'episcopato e i chierici minori verso Roma, unica superstite potenza tutelatrice dei loro diritti. E la Curia, naturalmente, ne approfittò per legarseli con vincoli d'assoluta dipendenza. Ricondotta dai successivi scacchi subiti in campo politico su un terreno di ambizioni più propriamente religiose, la Chiesa contò sul clero secolare come sulla sua milizia regolare, abbandonando ai religiosi compiti secondari di copertura o di affiancamento.

La riscossa degli ordini e delle congregazioni, definitasi in questi ultimi anni come movimento di autoriforma in funzione di quella più ampia a cui convogliare l'intera organizzazione ecclesiastica,

doveva fatalmente suscitare serie apprensioni nei circoli vaticani.

La diana era stata data, un anno e mezzo fa, da un articolo di padre Lombardi sulla *Civiltà Cattolica*. L'appello però era piuttosto vago e non sollevò obbiezioni. Quando invece si espressero più decise e precise volontà d'azione, la Curia fu abilissima nell'appropriarsene, facendosi subito promotrice e organizzatrice d'un convegno all'uopo. L'iniziativa fu fervorosamente acclamata dagli incauti, ma non appena iniziò a realizzarsi, il gioco fu palese anche ai più ingenui. I primi equivoci affiorarono a proposito dell'epiteto con cui si convenne di denominare il Congresso. Mentre lo stesso cardinal Micara, che lo presiedette, disse nel suo discorso di apertura, ch'esso mirava allo studio e alla preparazione « di un *rinnovamento* di quelli che è convenuto chiamare gli stati di perfezione riconosciuti dalla Chiesa », praticamente la denominazione definitiva fu quella di *Congresso d'aggiornamento* o di « settimana di studi ». I più intelligenti fiutarono subito l'insidia e pensarono con raccapriccio d'essere stati convitati nè più nè meno che a una sterile accademia.

Ma quali competenze avrebbe avuto un congresso di più di 1500 religiosi intervenuti da tutte le parti del mondo a rappresentare oltre 150 forme d'associazione? Anche a questo riguardo le illusioni non durarono oltre le 48 ore. Infatti, nella mattinata del terzo giorno, il segretario della Congregazione in persona, padre Larraona, disse senza eufemismi e molto rudemente che il congresso non doveva essere considerato come un concilio eccl-

astico con poteri legislativi o come rappresentante la S. Congregazione dei religiosi sotto i cui auspici era stato convocato: esso aveva il solo compito di informare e di informarsi, di mettere a fuoco i problemi del momento sotto tutti gli aspetti, di studiare e suggerire le possibili vie di adattamento in modo da ottenere i massimi risultati: sarebbe poi spettato alla Sacra Congregazione vagliare e utilizzare il prezioso materiale fornito. Di fatto, data la colluvie congestionata e massiccia delle relazioni (5 al mattino e 3 al pomeriggio), le discussioni generali con cui si chiudeva ogni giornata, erano ridotte al minimo e continuaron ad esserlo anche dopo l'aperta protesta di numerosi intervenuti.

Occorreva però soprattutto frustrare gli sforzi che le varie correnti avrebbero tentato di fare pur di giungere a qualche risultato. Si decise perciò di distinguere il Congresso in tre parti, la prima dedicata allo studio della vita religiosa e delle sue forme, la seconda alla formazione delle reclute, la terza all'apostolato, lasciando un tempo minimo alle due ultime — le più concrete — e dando il massimo sviluppo alla prima, in modo che i grossi calibri del giure (che sconvolsero però anche le altre due sessioni, specie la seconda) potessero darsi convegno per tornare e bizantineggiare coi loro cavilli. Tra le loro assurde relazioni, le poche elevazioni mistiche o le magre interpretazioni teologiche a cui sarebbe stato dato di far capolino, si sarebbero trovate sfasate e stonate. In tal modo il duello tra le due tendenze che s'erano preparate ad affrontarsi per imporre al nuovo volto spirituale della vita religiosa la propria fisionomia — e cioè

la tendenza contemplativa (capeggiata dai dominicani e dai carmelitani) e la tendenza attivista (promossa dai gesuiti e dai salesiani) — furono rapide di incrociare le armi da questi giocolieri d'una « lettera che uccide lo spirito » immessi in mano sul terreno della battaglia dall'abilissima Curia. La quale, comunque, lasciò l'onore delle armi ai più illustri e volonterosi paladini (Padre Lombardi ad esempio, fu addirittura invitato a parlare come primo relatore, ma con ciò anche abilmente accantonato sin dall'inizio).

I promotori del Convegno ebbero infatti gran cura nel distrarre senza parere gli invitati dal motivo fondamentale che li riuniva, divergendo la loro attenzione su motivi secondari e di colore. Così la messinscena coreografica — a parte, s'intende, quella procurata dagli stessi intervenuti con le fogge svarianti delle loro divise — fu curata con meticolosità specie nell'ingaggio dei primi attori d'ogni ordine, scritturati in massa, sia pure per recitare delle particine linde e innocue. Comunque, nonostante l'ingerenza ossessionante dei giuristi, i più volonterosi riuscirono a impostare, sia pure come semplice suggerimento, qualche vitale riforma pratica (come quella che mira a spostare l'età della professione — cioè dei voti — per lo meno a 18 anni, dopo il liceo e non dopo l'ex ginnasio) o a prospettare problemi sociali tutt'altro che indifferenti (come il trattamento dei fratelli laici da parte dei « padri »; trattamento, asseriva l'oratore, spesso da padroni a servi). Nè mancarono, soprattutto sul tema dell'« utilizzazione degli elementi del progresso » (auto, radio, cinema, televisione) degli in-

enti coloriti, quali sensati — come di chi avvisò non temere d'aggiornarsi, badando tuttavia a cadere nella contraddizione pratica di chi fugge dal mondo e poi si fa venire il mondo in casa — quali ottusi — come chi consigliò, in mancanza giornali cattolici, la lettura dei meno pericolosi i neutrali, ma in nessun caso degli avversari. Non si andò più in là. Lo stesso discorso del Pontefice, il giorno dell'Immacolata, non fu meno evasivo di quelli incomparabilmente più slavati e di luiti dei dirigenti della Congregazione tenuti la vigilia.

Questo per quanto riguarda il sintomatico Convegno. Ma noi dobbiamo parlare soprattutto dello stato attuale dei religiosi nella Chiesa. Se si dovesse ascoltare l'ormai fatidica « eloquenza delle cifre » non si avrebbe che ad essere ottimisti, dato il loro continuo e rigoglioso succrescere. La realtà, invece, è meno confortante. E a denunciarla lasciamo che sia una voce autorevole: quella di *Vita Cristiana*, una sensibilissima rivista di spiritualità edita dai Domenicani di Fiesole. Facendo eco alla sua maggiore consorella francese, *Vie Spirituelle*, essa trattò coraggiosamente il problema in un numero speciale uscito a bella posta alla vigilia del suddetto Convegno⁽¹⁾. L'articolo di fondo porta addirittura per titolo: « Decadenza dello stato religioso ». E gli argomenti, come la documentazione che li accompagna, non lasciano dubbi sulla opportunità ed esattezza di quel titolo audace. L'argomento fondamen-

⁽¹⁾ Quel quaderno, inutile dirlo, valse l'esonero al direttore della rivista intimato dalla Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi.

talè riguarda « la minaccia contro il concetto stesso di stato di perfezione nella sua applicazione allo stato religioso » : quella insita nella progressiva svalutazione dei voti solenni, dovuta sia alla concorrenza dei voti semplici che alla facilità della dispensa. Conseguenza : successo dei movimenti religiosi laici e crescita delle vocazioni per il clero o addirittura preferenza del celibato nel secolo.

Ma l'audacia della denuncia vera e propria incomincia là dove l'autore dell'articolo afferma che « prescindendo dagli ordini di vita puramente contemplativa, oggi le comunità religiose sono in genere *estroversi*. Più che a farsi santi si pensa di essere impegnati a fare dell'apostolato... Del resto anche le strutture giuridiche sembrano ormai adattarsi a questo sfasamento : le norme riguardanti l'attività esteriore hanno sommerso i relitti di quelle che furono un tempo le norme ascetiche di ciascun istituto. Anche nella scelta dei superiori non si cercano più dei direttori d'anime, dei maestri di ascetismo; perchè le società non sono concepite come scuole di perfezione cristiana. Si cercano invece dei buoni e saggi amministratori... ». E ancora : « Il *claustrum* non è più una barriera sufficiente per difendersi dall'invasione : quasi tutte le clausure sono state violate. Attraverso la radio e la stampa e i contatti personali, lo spirito del mondo filtra nei conventi, fomentando l'edonismo, potenziando l'individualismo e scoronando del suo alone soprannaturale il principio di autorità ». Ma, oltre all'invasione del mondo nei conventi, c'è l'evasione dei religiosi nel mondo. E con un ardore che non s'immaginerebbe, se lo stesso autore non ce lo descri-

vesse felicemente così: « Se Carlo Goldoni, bon'anima, tornasse in questo mondo a scrivere commedie, e si trovasse a vivere in certi conventi durante i primi giorni d'estate, forse ci darebbe una nuova edizione de « Le smanie della villeggiatura ». In genere i superiori lasciano ampia libertà all'iniziativa personale dei loro sudditi: e ciascuno cerca di stabilire il programma' più confortevole e vario per le vacanze, senza preoccuparsi eccessivamente dei limiti della tradizione ascetica della propria famiglia religiosa. Si viaggia, si fuma, si soggiorna nei luoghi di villeggiatura, col beneplacito dei R. R. Superiori e con l'aiuto di parenti e amici, sempre nei più ampi limiti delle proprie possibilità ».

Naturalmente lo spirito di povertà subisce, da parte di questa strana osmosi d'affetti e di interessi tra il convento e il mondo, un intorpidimento sempre più paralizzante. Conventi sontuosi con tutti i superflui agi della vita borghese vanno diffondendosi persino in Italia (tipico quello dei ... minori francescani in Roma, poco lungi dal Vaticano); ma anche là dove non si è giunti o non si è potuto giungere a tanto, le infrazioni individuali tollerate o consentite sono sempre più numerose: anzi « è il caso di dire sono ormai universali ».

A tutto ciò s'aggiungano le tipiche manifestazioni d'orgoglio collettivo che davvero meriterebbero uno studio specifico in un saggio sulla decadenza degli istituti religiosi. L'autore citato non accenna in proposito ai secolari dissidii che continuano a separare e, peggio, a opporre « storicamente » ordini delle stesse finalità e tendenze (come i domenicani e i gesuiti) o famiglie uscite dallo

stesso ceppo (come i minori e i conventuali francescani). Sono pagine pietose e, purtroppo, non da archivio ma anche di cronaca contemporanea. Ma i rilievi ch'egli fa sono anche più preziosi per la loro originalità, se non altro per il profano. « Oggi — scrive — molto si opera e molto si spende per la difesa del prestigio in quasi tutti gli istituti religiosi. Basta osservare l'accanimento col quale si lavora per le cause di beatificazione e di canonizzazione. Ci si preoccupa troppo di fare l'apologia del proprio istituto, di raccontare la storia del passato e di compulsare gli archivi, sottraendo preziose energie alla furiosa battaglia in cui si trova impegnata la Chiesa. Non parliamo poi del tentativo di creare una storia *ufficiale*, atta a nascondere le pagine meno luminose del proprio Ordine o della propria Congregazione. L'orgoglio di travestirsi con gli abiti della pia edificazione, come il demonio sa travestirsi da angelo di luce. E non si pensa che la verità non fa torto a nessuno, mentre la menzogna è sempre un'ingiustizia, e talora viene a turbare seriamente la carità. Sempre per il deprecato orgoglio collettivo si commette spesso l'errore di affrettare le nuove fondazioni, di aprire nuove case, di gettare nel campo dell'azione elementi troppo giovani e impreparati, esponendoli temerariamente alla rovina », ecc. ecc.

LA « BASE »

Un particolare molto significativo attirò l'attenzione di tutti, profani e no, in occasione del ricordato Congresso dei Religiosi. L'assenza cioè delle *religiose*, che furono invece sollecitate ad affollare ogni mattina la chiesa di S. Ignazio per invocare lumi sui lavori (!) dell'assemblea che le teneva sdegnosamente escluse. D'accordo che nessun potere d'ordine solleva le religiose al di sopra del ceto dei semplici fedeli, ma è anche un fatto che la loro particolare consacrazione a Dio le situa in una posizione che fu sempre ritenuta di favore e di privilegio sin dalla Chiesa apostolica. Eppure sino all'epoca moderna gli ordini religiosi femminili furono pochi e scarsamente diffusi, oltre che socialmente inefficienti. Fu con le congregazioni del Cinquecento, indirizzate soprattutto a scopi caritativi, che l'elemento femminile cominciò a traboccare nelle istituzioni religiose sin quasi a raggiungere, come ai nostri tempi, cifre iperboliche. Le forme di vita claustrali sopravvissero, ma sempre più stentatamente, soffocate quasi, quando non soppiantate, dalle dinamiche organizzazioni moderne. Dapprima prevalse, come si è detto, le attività caritative

(ospedaliere, per lo più), poi, ma ~~nu~~uali francescamente (in proporzioni cospicue) quelle ~~d'ogni~~ da ~~lavoro~~amento. Gli ultimi anni, anzi, hanno visto associazioni femminili lasciare persino l'abito religioso per dedicarsi a un apostolato di più sicura penetrazione sociale (da noi, sin dal 1921, la sezione femminile della Compagnia di San Paolo). Il ritmo quasi frenetico dell'azione apostolica portò però nell'ultimo mezzo secolo a eccessi gravissimi di improvvisazione tecnica. Un ingenuo pneumatismo faceva ritenere che una volta compiuto il noviziato religioso (periodo biennale consacrato a esclusive pratiche di pietà), le « professe » fossero naturalmente abili a tutti i compiti che le sempre più numerose fondazioni esigevano: esperte cuciniere, anche se semplici sperimentatrici; infermiere infallibili, anche se mediocri empiriche, e persino maestre onniscienti, anche se munite d'una semplice licenza elementare...

La situazione è abbastanza migliorata oggi (grazie soprattutto alla concorrenza subita da parte del personale laico), ma la maggior parte degli ordini religiosi femminili ignora ancora la preparazione professionale dei suoi membri e li avventura spesso nelle diverse specializzazioni nelle condizioni d'una paurosa verginità. Tuttavia la cultura religiosa è ancora il settore in cui, per quanto sembri impossibile, le religiose lasciano più a desiderare. Confondendo molto grossolanamente semplicistiche nozioni ascetiche e le vaghe formulazioni dogmatiche assimilate nelle meditazioni del noviziato con un autentico sapere teologico e morale, esse si onerano spesso d'insegnamenti che soltanto la loro ingenua

presunzione spiega come possano accollarsi. Senza riferirsi al vero è proprio insegnamento religioso nelle scuole, bastano a provarlo la preparazione dei fanciulli alla prima comunione e alla cresima. Guai poi se si dovesse trarre in esame i metodi con cui le religiose tengono di solito pensionati e colleghi.

La situazione di maggior regresso in cui si trovano le congregazioni religiose femminili è soprattutto quella relativa ai paesi latini, ai paesi cioè in cui esse hanno la maggior diffusione (a tutt'oggi). Una riforma (soprattutto per quelle congregazioni antiche legate a regole superatissime e dal cui giogo non riescono o, altrettanto spesso, non vogliono liberarsi) sarebbe quanto mai auspicabile. Invece sino a questo momento non se ne ha il più lontano sentore. La recentissima costituzione apostolica *Sponsa Christi*, imposta d'autorità da Pio XII, tratta soprattutto dei problemi dei superstiti ordini delle claustrali, a cui finalmente è concessa una mitigazione delle barbare regole d'isolamento in cui sinora hanino anacronisticamente vissuto e una maggior apertura apostolica, qualora lo desiderino.

* * *

Non abbiamo sottolineato senza intenzione il trattamento autoritario dei religiosi da parte della Gerarchia. Nel suo allontanarsi dalle origini, la Chiesa ha evoluto in direzione completamente opposta a quella degli stati. Questi, dalle forme assolute, son via via passati a forme più temperatamente o addirittura rivoluzionario democratiche: essa da un indiscutibile e sostanziale democratismo a forme sempre più autoritarie e totalitarie. Secondo

S. Paolo, vigoroso assertore della gerarchia e dello spirito di disciplina, Dio avrebbe voluto una Chiesa che fosse, nella sua maturazione, l'opera stessa dei credenti; fondata da Cristo, ma coedificata dai fedeli: il frutto insieme della loro preghiera, del loro amore, della loro azione. E perciò non l'avrebbe costituita sin dal principio come qualcosa di completo e di perfetto, bensì come qualcosa d'imperfetto che realizza sempre meglio se stesso secondo l'ideale preconcepito.

Sta di fatto che, in origine, la gerarchia stessa era in qualche modo nelle mani dei fedeli, se non altro per il fatto ch'essa risultava condizionata, dai suoi gradi più alti ai minimi, da elezioni popolari. Senza dire che sino al concilio di Trento ed oltre, i gradi della gerarchia sia d'ordine che di giurisdizione erano facilmente accessibili ai laici persino nelle forme più ingiustificabili (quelle, cioè, intese a favorire il gioco politico).

Il secolo XIX, come si è detto, vide l'inizio del più grande accentramento e della più tenace concentrazione burocratica che mai la Chiesa abbia conosciuto nella sua storia. E proprio mentre la crisi politico-sociale maturava negli stati riforme sempre più nettamente democratiche. Mentre cioè in seno ai regimi civili il popolo acquistava prestigio e potenza, nell'ambito della Chiesa esso veniva sempre più respinto ai margini, come massa inerte e passiva. È vero che l'abile teoria dell'« autorità come servizio d'amore » cercava di coonestare e sopire le ripercussioni di una così estemporanea condotta, ma la violenza del sopruso non poteva non essere avvertita dagli spiriti più sensibili. Il

liberalismo cattolico francese d'un L'acordaire e d'un Montalembert (Lamennais attenderà invano una riabilitazione ortodossa) dovette gettare fiumi d'acqua nel suo vino aspro e vigoroso. E quello italiano d'un Manzoni e d'un Rosmini accettò adirittura d'imbavagliarsi.

L'evoluzione irresistibile della crisi sociale e quella sempre più evidente dei regimi assoluti di cui era alleata, finirono tuttavia per imporre alla Curia l'urgenza di provvedimenti che fungessero, se non altro transitoriamente, da palliativi. Leone XIII seppe abbandonare in parte (più sul terreno sociale, in verità, che su quello politico, specie in Italia dove la situazione era complicata dalla « questione romana ») la politica ottusa e confusa del suo predecessore. Ma si dovette attendere, soprattutto dopo l'irrigidimento ostruzionista provocato dal debole Pio X, l'avvento dell'autoritario Papa Ratti perchè la soluzione fosse brillantemente intuita quanto vigorosamente imposta.

Sino alla caduta degli Imperi Centrali e specie del cattolicissimo Impero d'Austria, la Curia romana aveva nettamente avversato i regimi popolari o costituzionali e subito come una sgradevole ma fatale necessità il costituirsi di forze politiche cattoliche nei paesi dov'essi avevano preso il sopravvento. A parte la sua fobiaca diffidenza verso le forme parlamentari (che a loro volta l'avevano ricambiata con la più decisa avversione sino a perseguitarla apertamente), i partiti stessi che affermavano di ispirarsi alle sue dottrine erano coalizioni troppo autonome e lontane dal suo influsso. D'altra parte, i vari *non expedit* erano finiti in autentiche

catasfrofi. Inoltre la vittoria dei regimi totalitari non permetteva più di ritornare sulle posizioni ormai perdute. Occorrevano dei cavalli di Troia più duttili e facilmente manovrabiili dei partiti. In un mondo che quasi d'incanto aveva assistito alla laicizzazione di tutte le forme della vita sociale e all'assottigliamento più impressionante delle file del clero e delle perseguitate congregazioni religiose non si poteva che tornare a far leva sui laici.

Pio XI, che sino alla fine del suo episcopato milanese era stato (in opposizione dichiarata col suo predecessore, il card. Ferrari) un nemico irriducibile delle forme preesistenti dell'Azione Cattolica, una volta giunto al soglio romano, mutò quasi improvvisamente gusti e predilezioni. L'Azione Cattolica divenne, a suo dire, la pupilla dei suoi occhi e contro gli attriti più ostinati della stessa Curia romana la impose al mondo intero. Egli infatti vi aveva genialmente intuito il mezzo ideale per attivizzare i laici cattolici facendone le *longae manus* del clero dissanguato, trattenendoli però nello stesso tempo in un'orbita prettamente religiosa dov'essi non avrebbero potuto aspirare ad autonomie intemperanti quando non troppo pericolose alla Chiesa. A tempo opportuno, tali formazioni di élite, debitamente plasmate, avrebbero anche potuto mutarsi in movimenti politici o para-politici, conservando però dei legami sempre saldi con la gerarchia romana.

I precedenti storici della collaborazione del laicato al clero furono facilmente raccolti sin dalle scarse testimonianze sulla Chiesa primitiva e quelli teologici ancor più facilmente apprestati sulla base

soprattutto del pensiero relativo alla concezione della Chiesa come Corpo Mistico del Cristo e all'inserzione vitale in esso di tutti i fedeli mediante i sacramenti del battesimo e della cresima. E l'Azione Cattolica fu definita ufficialmente dallo stesso Pontefice come « la partecipazione del laicato cattolico all'apostolato gerarchico della Chiesa ».

Uno studio specifico sull'Azione Cattolica verrà offerto da un altro collaboratore in un prossimo volume di questa collana e non vale quindi la pena di dilungarcisi qui. Basti dire che, dopo l'accenramento curiale del secolo scorso e la riforma del clero condotta nel primo quarto del presente, nessun avvenimento è stato di maggior importanza nella storia contemporanea della Chiesa quanto quello del riconoscimento ufficiale dei movimenti d'Azione Cattolica (sorti, per precisione storica, negli ultimi decenni del secolo scorso per impulso di alcuni laici intraprendenti, ma a carattere sostanzialmente aristocratico di circolo o di confraternita). A Pio XI — indubbiamente il pontefice più grande, sinora, del secolo — basterebbe questa iniziativa per giustificargli un giudizio tanto favorevole.

Un autentico storico, tuttavia, non può accontentarsi della scorsa della cronaca, ma deve affrontare tale avvenimento nella sua vera portata. Perchè esso fu soprattutto un'abilissima trovata del pontefice milanese per secondare lo spirito dei tempi, senza però correggere sostanzialmente l'indirizzo ereditato dai suoi predecessori. In realtà, infatti, l'inserzione del laicato cattolico nell'attività apostolica (non d'ordine né di giurisdizione) della gerarchia, si risolve tutta ed esclusivamente in funzio-

ne di quest'ultima. Le varie riforme degli statuti dell'A. C. lo attestano inconfutabilmente. L'élite del laicato, militando nelle file dell'A. C., viene infatti allineata come forza complementare sul fronte del clero minore e usata specialmente come avanguardia di penetrazione nelle forze neutre od ostili, a tutto beneficio dei piani tattici della Curia.

A questo punto, se lo spazio lo consentisse, si dovrebbe dar tutto il rilievo che si meritano alle due correnti che dagli inizi, si può dire, contrastano in seno all'A. C. di tutti i paesi, ma specialmente del nostro. E cioè la corrente ascetico-apostolica e quella attivista-politicante. La prima, che vede l'A. C. impegnata qualitativamente su un campo di formazione religiosa e morale dei suoi membri e di coloro che sono oggetto del suo apostolato; la seconda, che mira eminentemente a un'affermazione religioso-politica restauratrice di ideali che si potrebbero definire neoguelfi. Teoricamente la prima è avallata dalla totalità dei documenti pontifici, ma alla seconda non mancano le enunciazioni ambigue contenute negli stessi testi e le sollecitazioni più o meno guardinghe che la confortano dall'alto a proseguire nelle sue ambizioni. È ovvio che soltanto la prima forma è veramente evangelica e accettabile da un vero cristiano, la seconda essendo stata in anticipo denunciata e rinunciata da Cristo (« Il mio regno non è di questo mondo »). Ma è anche una realtà che attualmente la seconda, specie in Italia, ha il sopravvento e minaccia, soprattutto dopo le già recenti e dannosissime contaminazioni col mondo politico, quel che di buono era stato ottenuto precedentemente dalla prima.

L'A. C. comunque è la più grande illusione che la gerarchia abbia offerto al laicato fedele in cambio di quanto riuscì a sottrarre nel corso d'interi secoli. Perchè, qual'è in effetti la sua parte attiva in seno alla Chiesa? quale la sua vera influenza? Nonostante il suo notevole apporto e la sua più intima collaborazione, la « base » non ha sino ad oggi riottenuto un solo degli antichi diritti e mai come oggi sa d'irrisione parlare di quel « sensus Ecclesiae » che, come nei primi secoli, dovrebbe avere il suo peso nell'approfondimento della verità religiosa e morale. Forse tutto quello che ha ottenuto è stato di poter recentemente rinnovare, sia pur in diverso stile, con o senza baschi monocolori, alcune turistiche marce su Roma di vietata memoria — oppure di vociferare in piazza S. Pietro durante alcuni imperdonabili discorsi di stonato stile demagogico e di tono bassamente comiziesco.

Ma passiamo dalle persone alle opere.

L'AZIONE

Il significato della Chiesa nel mondo è anzitutto — come tutti sanno — una testimonianza alla Verità e in un secondo tempo una vivificazione dei suoi membri nello spirito della Verità.

EVANGELIZZAZIONE E TEOLOGIA

Al suo primo compito Cristo l'iniziò invitandola alla predicazione. All'apostolato della parola, cioè. Non alla retorica della parola, ma all'entusiasmo della parola: alla fede dichiarata e comunicata, difesa ed esaltata mediante la parola. Personalmente lo stesso Cristo non volle scrivere nulla e tutto il suo magistero fu un'improvvisazione spontanea quanto profonda, fervida quanto intima.

E, come Cristo, i suoi discepoli non fecero che parlare. Fuor di alcuni memoriali a scopo catechetico (i vangeli), essi infatti non scrissero nulla. Le « Lettere » non sono degli scritti che materialmente. In realtà sono delle dettature senza impegni formali, degli abbandoni personali e passionali, delle sostituzioni tormentate e frementi di parole

impossibili a scambiarsi, per la
dolce a tu per tu dell'incontro fan...
chevole.

Gli apostoli non scrissero mai dei trattati. L'epistola agli ebrei, l'unico trattato del Nuovo Testamento, è di un discepolo di S. Paolo, non dell'apostolo. Costui avrebbe rabbividito, come davanti agli scritti degli scribi e dei maestri della Mischna e del Talmud, venendo a contatto con un qualsiasi manuale moderno di teologia.

Per secoli i successori degli apostoli non seppero, per fortuna, scrivere libri. Quasi tutta la Patrologia latina e greca ignora, anche nelle diatribe più confuse e vischiose, anche nelle colluttazioni polemiche più violente, anche nelle aridità delle discettazioni bizantine, l'arte dello scrivere. E ciò non è per nulla contraddetto dal fatto che molti dei suoi autori siano dei classici passati nella storia delle lettere. Essi potevano anche essere dei grammatici eccezionali, dei retori famosi, dei dialettici temutissimi: ma i loro libri sono soprattutto confessioni di fede, testimonianze vive e sofferte alla Verità, appelli accorati e cattivanti alla sua sequela. Per ultimo soltanto, e come per caso, dei libri. E mai, a dire il vero, libri furono scritti con tanta noncuranza per l'equilibrio delle parti, disturbati da tanti *excursus*, variati con tanti toni. Oggi, di questi libri, persino gli scrittori cristiani, ad eccezione di pochi santi (i santi, anche quelli che parlano molto, scrivono di solito pochissimo) o di pochi grandi spiriti (come un Bloy e un Péguy), han perso finanche la capacità d'imitazione. Ebbene, la caratteristica comune di tutte queste opere è di essere improvvisate e

impia ancora, una da un'ispirazione incalzante, in una parola: *parlate*.

La Verità religiosa, infatti, non entra in pericolo che quando è scritta. Perchè allora diventa obbiettiva, anonima, morta. E non c'è maggior sacrilegio che trasformare in formule sillogistiche o giuridiche la fresca ardenza e la tumultuosa immediatezza del dialogo Dio-io che è l'essenza della religione. Non si può avvicinare il fuoco senza accendersene. E non si può parlar di Dio senza uscir di sè. Far della dialettica su Dio è possibile soltanto dopo averlo ridotto a un'idea fredda ed esanime: dopo averlo ucciso. E farla sulla sua rivelazione è altrettanto criminoso: « un messaggero — ha scritto Chesterton — non fantastica su quel che il messaggio possa essere, e non discute su quello che dovrebbe essere; egli lo consegna qual'è; non è una teoria o una fantasia, ma un fatto ». Perciò sosteniamo che la teologia scolastica, nei suoi eccessi, è stata il tradimento più grande del precetto di Cristo: « andate, predicate ! ».

Il lettore non s'attenderà certo, a questo punto, una disanima completa dei torti della teologia. Sarebbe troppo lungo e impegnativo. Tanto più che non ci sentiamo affatto di passare per dei ciechi iconoclasti. Ma sta di fatto che, come l'ermeneutica biblica ha quasi soltanto dissezionato e sterilizzato la Bibbia e i Vangeli, la teologia dogmatica ha quasi esclusivamente scomposto e mumificato la rivelazione. In realtà essa ha finito soprattutto per sopire e tacitare nell'uomo il senso del mistero. Valgono anche per la teologia queste parole che E. Mounier scriveva a proposito delle

realità spirituali e del loro culto...
niamo l'idea chiara; è ancora la miglior garanzia contro il confusionismo e il falso misticismo, e inoltre rende molti servigi allo scienziato e al matematico. Non diciamo che l'idea chiara è l'idea superficiale. Nella maggior parte dei casi, senza dubbio. Ma può sprigionarsi a una certa profondità e la si trova a tutti i livelli: la sua chiarezza non è altro che semplificazione, viatico provvisorio tra due ignoranze. Circoscrivere un pensiero non significa esaurirlo; troppi difensori dello spirituale si isteriliscono per questa facilità. Spiegare il complesso riducendolo al semplice significa quasi sempre spiegare secondo l'immaginazione, meccanicamente, fabbricando e scomponendo. La spiegazione spirituale, invece, è per noi una spiegazione del semplice per mezzo del complesso, una spiegazione del semplice *nel* complesso, quindi sempre una spiegazione ricorrendo al più oscuro, al più misterioso, al più difficile. L'atto stesso di soddisfazione dello spirito vien ridotto nella spiegazione in insoddisfazione... Il mistero non vale per la sua oscurità, come credono generalmente sia quelli che parteggiano per esso come i suoi oppositori, ma perchè è il sintomo diffuso di una realtà più ricca delle chiarezze troppo immediate. La sua dignità sta tutta nella sua positività diffusa, in quella presenza che esso enuncia » ⁽¹⁾. Menomare il senso del mistero significa recidere nell'uomo la radice stessa della sua religiosità. Una religione-filosofia o, me-

⁽¹⁾ v. *Rivoluzione personalista e comunitaria*, tr. it. nelle Ed. Comunità, 1949, p. 71.

glio ancora, una religione filosofica (cioè degradata a filosofia — nel primo caso, la filosofia sarebbe assurta a religione) non può risolversi che in una parodia della religione. Di qui la nocività della teologia.

Dopo di che dire che, per di più, essa costituisce uno spreco inutile di energie può sembrare superfluo. Ma in fondo si tratta d'una dimostrazione concreta e non dialettica: più perspicua, quindi, per la maggior parte dei lettori. Si osservi, per esempio, il primo settore della teologia: l'apologetica. Come si sa, essa si sforza di dimostrare la necessità della religione e la realtà storica della rivelazione cristiana e della fondazione della Chiesa. Ebbene, questa scienza propone ed impone un suo *curriculum* esclusivo per giungere alla fede respingendone qualsiasi altro ambisso a sostituirlo. E non vale che l'esperienza dei più noti convertiti lo dimostri tutt'altro che unico e necessitante (verrebbe anzi da dire: quasi eccezionale). La Chiesa continua ostinatamente a difenderlo, confondendo come necessari presupposti di fede (per es., l'adesione previa al miracolo e alle profezie) quelle che, nelle crisi spirituali dei convertiti non sono che le conseguenze della loro adesione alla fede.

Ma una prova ancor più convincente e risonante è quella offerta dalla storia del processo di lievitazione operato nel mondo dal cristianesimo. Possono sembrare paradossali le citazioni che stiamo per fare, ma si converrà della loro obiettività dalla serietà scientifica oltre che dalla notoria ortodossia dell'autore a cui risalgono: J. Maritain. Eccole: « Non è nelle altezze della teologia, ma nelle pro-

ondità della coscienza profana e dell'esistenza profana che agisce il cristianesimo così inteso, prendendo talvolta forme eretiche e perfino di rivolta, in cui sembra rinnegarsi, come se i frammenti spezzati della chiave del paradiso, cadendo nella nostra vita di miseria e unendosi in lega con i metalli della terra, riuscissero più della pura essenza del metallo celeste ad attivare la storia del mondo. Non è stato concesso a dei credenti integralmente fedeli al dogma cattolico, ma bensì a dei razionalisti, di proclamare in Francia i diritti dell'uomo e del cittadino, a dei puritani di dare in America l'ultimo colpo allo schiavismo, a dei comunisti atei di abolire in Russia l'assolutismo del profitto privato » ⁽¹⁾. « La democrazia è minacciata, anch'essa, nella sua stessa esistenza, e dagli stessi nemici (dello spirito cristiano). Sebbene la sua origine sia evangelica, sebbene essa derivi da quell'azione di stimolo nascosto di cui ho già parlato, attraverso cui il cristianesimo vivifica oscuramente la storia terrena, è nondimeno alleandosi a ideologie erronee e a tendenze aberranti che essa ha fatto la sua apparizione nel mondo » ⁽²⁾.

Non per questo vogliamo dire che l'abolizione delle discipline teologiche sia inderogabile per una proficua riforma della Chiesa. Anch'esse adempiono a una precisa funzionalità, benefica e feconda a patto che se ne limitino gli eccessi e se ne temperino e adeguino i metodi. La dogmatomania non è certo il parto più felice della teologia cattolica.

(¹) v. *Cristianesimo e Democrazia*, tr. it. nelle Ed.i Comunità, 1950, p. 31.

(²) Op. cit., p. 33.

L'intemperanza dei teologi cattolici è stata anche più fatale di quella degli esegeti biblici protestanti. E tutt'e due non han fatto che coartare lo slancio religioso che è ben altro d'un prurito meningico o d'una chirurgia di testi sacri. Una « dotta ignoranza » può essere paradossalmente il culmine della felicità filosofica, ma è certo la *conditio sine qua non* dello stimolo religioso. Credere e sapere sono contraddittori, soprattutto se si esaurisce il credere in una voluttà di conoscenza. Dio è soprattutto Amore. Anche Verità, certo. Ma irraggiungibile. Nell'Amore, invece, egli è totalmente aperto e penetrabile.

* * *

Che dire poi di certe intransigenze filosofiche della Chiesa? Che per salvaguardare la verità rivelata essa si sia fermata al tomismo, sia pur leggermente aggiornato, è un po' troppo. Lo lamentava pubblicamente, non è molto, un filosofo italiano, M. F. Sciacca, noto anch'egli per la sua scrupolosa ortodossia, ricordando un'insinuazione di G. Gentile a un rosminiano (« crede Lei che se Antonio Rosmini fosse oggi vivo, le autorità ecclesiastiche consentirebbero che egli insegnasse teologia in una Università di Stato? »). « Ecco il punto della questione. Ancora oggi la Teologia naturale non si può insegnare se non secondo un determinato sistema filosofico, detto tomista, tomista secondo il tomismo o alcune interpretazioni della filosofia di S. Tommaso, che, a mio avviso, non ne escludono altre e non interpretano il vero (o tutto) spirito del pensiero del Dottore Angelico: spirito agostiniano, anche se

espresso con vocabolario aristotelico? E si domandava: « È possibile che oggi si possa riavere, proprio per il bene della nostra causa, quella libertà nell'ortodossia, che si ebbe nel Medioevo? Cioè, perché non si può insegnare Teologia naturale (che è scienza filosofica) secondo il punto di vista agostiniano, rosminiano, ecc. sempre, s'intende, dentro l'ortodossia? O che il cattolicesimo s'identifichi proprio con il tomismo? Forse che prima di S. Tommaso e del tomismo non vi son stati Cattolicesimo e Teologia Cattolica? »

« È possibile rendere questo insegnamento veramente operante, cioè tale che *interpreti i bisogni spirituali del presente?* Fino ad ora mi pare che esso si limiti a combattere solo gli errori del passato o quelli del pensiero moderno, soltanto dal punto di vista del tomismo, con scarsissima attitudine ad interpretare le esigenze della filosofia da Cartesio in poi e ad esprimerle (dentro l'ortodossia, ripeto) in un nuovo pensiero cristiano-cattolico, che si giovi naturalmente di S. Tommaso, anche se non è tomista ».

E concludeva: « Fino a quando, io credo, non si siano poste, dibattute, chiarite e risolte queste due questioni, a poco gioverà che si tengano insegnamenti di teologia. Noi dobbiamo fare in modo di « cristianizzare » il pensiero moderno, non limitarci a contrapporgli, esteriormente, una espressione filosofica non rinnovata e non rinvigorita ».

Ma questo è solo un esempio dell'intransigenza metodicamente usata dalla Chiesa in quella che essa stessa definisce la sua gelosa protezione del deposito rivelato. Infatti, dopo averlo sottoposto ad ogni

sorta di « trattamenti » ed elaborato in un complesso di proporzioni fuor di misura gigantesche, articolandolo come un codice intricatissimo di « tesi », essa lo va difendendo con una vigilanza che sembra confinare con la mania. In realtà, la quasi totalità dei suoi membri ignora persino l'esistenza di tale apparato, ma guai all'incauto studioso che s'imbattesse a toccare un sol punto dei reticolati che lo proteggono. Sarebbe fulminato all'istante da mille anatemi. Solo agli ignari la fedeltà alla Chiesa è facile. Pei dotti (quasi ogni studioso di materie teologiche ha le sue avventure del genere) essa costituisce un gioco spesso incompor-tabile. Le censure e le condanne colpiscono indiscriminatamente (e con conseguenze spesso fatali) i meglio intenzionati e zelanti come i più faciloni e azzardati. Eppure, spesso ciò che è stato prima condannato vien poi ammesso, come ciò che prima è stato accolto, vien più tardi respinto. E non importa che ovunque s'incontrino incertezze insuperabili; l'intransigenza nel difendere le stesse ipotesi è egualmente assoluta. Inutile poi aggiungere che la medesima linea di condotta è applicata nei riguardi dell'ermeneutica biblica e della teologia morale.

* * *

Quest'ultima è in buona parte guarita — e bisogna onestamente riconoscerlo — dalla febbre catastica che l'aveva posseduta qualche secolo fa, ma soltanto per cadere anch'essa sotto il dispotismo della ragione raziocinante. Il discorso della montagna è diventato in tal modo una selva fittissima

di teoremi congeniati sulla chiave di alcuni umanissimi e discutibilissimi principî, i quali servono volta a volta ai vari autori per contraddirò o approvare, per restringere o allargare il significato e la portata dei precetti evangelici. Tra l'altro, il gesuitismo della morale cattolica è ormai un luogo comune, ma pochi ne avvertono tutta la sacrilega aberrazione, non percependo che l'essenza della morale di Cristo è proprio nel suo culto della sincerità.

Questo può sembrare e in parte è un giudizio eccessivo, perchè evidentemente troppo sommario. Ora niente è più lontano da noi dal voler insinuare che la teologia morale cattolica sia intenzionalmente un'antitesi totale di quella evangelica. Tuttavia il risultato è, *in parte*, questo, sia per l'amplificazione enorme in cui la precettistica di Cristo è stata diluita, sia per certe tendenze spurie che vi si sono infiltrate. Basti citare, oltre al *probabilismo* (d'origine gesuitica), il *pansessualismo*, tra i difetti per eccesso, e il disinteresse per i problemi della giustizia, tra quelli per difetto.

La morale di Cristo, e persino quella paolina, erano senz'altro una morale di purezza, ma non certo una morale ossessionata dal fatto del sesso. Cristo non ebbe che pochi e indiretti accenni in proposito e S. Paolo s'accontentò di alcuni lacunici precetti. La morale cattolica, invece, specie dopo la sua esposizione in trattati, è risalita al pansessualismo che contraddistingue l'etica rudimentale (ma non in questo settore, dov'è addirittura morbosamente diffusa e minuta) dei popoli primitivi. I trattati del *de sexto* (*praecepto*) e del *de*

matrimonio sono, nei *corpus* cattolici, i più farruginosi; ma anche gli altri sono punteggiati da continui riferimenti o trattazioni *de re sexuali*. In questo campo poi la casistica domina ancora sino alle forme più grottesche. Naturalmente, senza che tante meticolose sovrastrutture abbiano le minime giustificazioni nei testi sacri. Più grata sono le attribuzioni dei vari gradi di colpevolezza alla vastissima gamma delle trasgressioni *in re venerea*, superate solo in estrosità dai mille precetti proibizionistici (tipico tra i quali quello relativo al controllo delle nascite, al cui impossibile rigore si tenta poi di ovviare suggerendo gesuiticamente la pratica del metodo Ogino-Knaus). Ma quale sicuro fondamento offrono i testi neotestamentari alla stessa tesi cattolica che si oppone al divorzio?

Non meno grave è l'accennata trascuratezza che nella prassi morale del clero e (per riverbero) in quella dei fedeli ha il settore della giustizia. In realtà in ogni compendio di morale in uso nelle scuole teologiche i trattati *de justitia*, sono ancora quasi identici a quelli in uso due secoli or sono: ignoranti cioè la maggior parte dei rapporti economici sorti nell'ultimo secolo e specie negli ultimi decenni. Come manca una trattazione adeguata delle « relazioni di lavoro », che proponga una sintesi dell'etica del lavoro, oggi tanto attuale ed urgente. Quello che è più grave, poi, è che tali problemi siano rarissimamente affrontati dal pulpito e, peggio ancora, che ne manchi assolutamente (come lo attesta la pratica del confessionale) la coscienza nei fedeli.

INFLUENZA CULTURALE

Per quanto riguarda la corruzione della predicazione abbiam detto sufficientemente nel volumetto dedicato al *Prete, oggi*. E altrettanto per quel che si riferisce ai metodi propagandistici in uso ai nostri giorni nella prassi ecclesiastica e circa il culto.

È quindi più opportuno accennare qui all'influenza che la Chiesa tenta di esercitare sulla cultura in genere. Presso i cattolici è tutt'altro che lontana l'eco dell'affermazione d'uno dei suoi più eminenti vescovi contemporanei, il card. Suhard di Parigi. Nella sua famosa pastorale del '47 sull'*Agonia della Chiesa* egli invocò una nuova pentecoste intellettuale sul mondo: « È venuta l'ora — vi si leggeva — nella quale il maggior servizio che si possa rendere alla Chiesa e ai suoi figli, è quello di comporre la « Somma cristiana » del mondo che si sta elaborando. Il più grave errore in cui potrebbero cadere i cristiani del secolo XX, l'errore che i loro discendenti non perdonerebbero loro mai, sarebbe il lasciare che il mondo si faccia e si unifichi senza di essi — senza Dio, o contro di Lui —; sarebbe di accontentarsi per il loro apostolato di ricette e di espeditivi. Possa esser vanto del nostro tempo l'aver intrapreso ciò che altri condurrà a buon fine: un umanesimo commisurato al mondo e ai disegni di Dio ». Grande e legittima ambizione che ha subito mobilitato le élites dell'intelletualità francese ed ha avuto anche larga eco tra noi orientando attività culturali preesistenti. Mentre infatti le *Settimane di Studio di Camaldoli*

e in genere quelle (da essa diramate) promosse dal « Movimento dei Laureati Cattolici » hanno continuato nella loro linea severa di approfondimenti e aggiornamenti teologici, gli *Studi Teologici per Laici*, diffusisi rapidamente in Italia dopo la guerra e ormai in atto in quasi tutte le città della penisola, fallito il tentativo di corsi regolari di teologia, hanno spostato la loro attenzione verso tentativi organici, anche se in genere superficiali, di interpretare cattolicamente i vari problemi scientifici e tecnici dell'ora. Come del resto avviene, ma con impegno molto più serio e con un'organizzazione molto più complessa e ricca, alla *Summer School* di Friburgo aperta nei mesi estivi a un variopinto pubblico internazionale (la *Hochschule* di Bonn invece è ancora piuttosto accademica).

E quella indicata dal card. Suhard è senza dubbio la vera direzione che l'attività di pensiero dei cattolici dovrebbe perseguire, in piena libertà di lavoro e senza alcuno spirito di settarismo, (ahimè, i due difetti essenziali e quasi sempre esiziali dei loro movimenti), ricordando che solo in tal modo e non per vie ufficiali e violente (ah! l'angustia spirituale dell'*Humani generis*: un autentico piccolo e grottesco Sillabo, riverbero quasi esclusivamente di grette dispute fratesche...) il lievito cristiano può trasfigurare il mondo. Lo stesso cardinale ricordava poi ciò che è troppo spesso dimenticato dallo smanioso dirigismo delle alte sfere curiali (non bisogna ricordare che è un vescovo di... periferia!), e cioè che la Chiesa « non ha la missione di risolvere direttamente i problemi di ordine tecnico. Lascia alle varie competenze la loro legittima

autonomia: non si sposa a nessun sistema scientifico, sociale o politico e restituisce i cristiani alla piena libertà delle loro scelte e delle loro ricerche, le quali hanno i loro metodi propri e il loro oggetto determinato. Tale distinzione è indispensabile onde evitare ogni confusione di « regni ». Non bisogna dunque attendere dalla Chiesa ciò ch'essa non può né deve dare: essa anima tutto, ma non edifica lei la civiltà. Ma ciò che non può fare essa, possono e devono farlo i cristiani ». La vera vittoria e il vero trionfo della Chiesa, infatti, saranno celebrati il giorno in cui la sua presenza nel mondo non sarà quasi avvertita, ma tutto vivrà di lei.

Pio XII, in uno dei suoi più impegnativi discorsi, ha tentato di distinguere l'azione della Chiesa da quella dei vari imperialismi. Anche se così fosse, le manifestazioni della Chiesa hanno da tempo assunto un carattere propagandistico da prodotto commerciale che, a parte la grossolanità della messinscena, è soprattutto antievangelico. D'accordo che, secondo i sinottici, Cristo ha detto che i non credenti debbon vedere le buone opere dei suoi seguaci, ma non certo per la ciarlatanesca ostentazione di costoro. E meschina è la mania accaparrazionistica dei geni che hanno illustrato le lettere o le scienze o le arti — con opere magari tutt'altro che cattoliche — pel solo pretesto d'un certificato battesimal. Come non si aggiunge nessuna vera gloria alla Chiesa con l'istituzione d'un'Accademia delle Scienze, gesto d'un ormai superato mecenatismo, tanto più in una epoca nemica a tutti i pantheon quanto entusiasta per tutte le forme di pubblicità redditizia.

ATTIVITÀ CARITATIVA

Ma un orgoglio di primati culturali è ancora facilmente giustificabile. Un orgoglio della carità invece, è semplicemente abominevole. Perchè non si può essere superbi che per egoismo e non si può amare che per donarsi. Un amore che insuperbisce o non è mai stato amore o è un amore già avviato a corrompersi.

La speculazione propagandistica della carità ha raccolto le sue condanne più feroci proprio dalle labbra di Cristo, rimproverante ai farisei di suonar la tromba nelle piazze prima di scendervi a far l'elemosina. Per parte loro, invece, i suoi seguaci non avrebbero dovuto far conoscere alla sinistra il dono fatto dalla destra. I Vangeli ci dicono indirettamente che tra i Dodici ce n'era uno cui erano affidati i denari destinati alle elemosine dei poveri, ma non una sola volta Cristo vi è descritto mentre la compie. Gesù anzi aveva persino pudore dei miracoli strappatigli dalla pietà e non operati per motivi dimostrativi della verità di quanto affermava. E quasi sempre raccomandava che non se ne dicesse nulla.

La Chiesa primitiva continuò con fervore le predilezioni di carità del suo Fondatore. E neppure dinanzi all'enorme impressione che esercitavano sui pagani le opere di misericordia (si ricordi la reazione imitatrice di Giuliano l'Apostata) i cristiani dei primi secoli ne menaron vanto. Nelle Apologie del II secolo e in tutti gli altri scritti posteriori sino alle lettere di Gregorio Magno — il più grande Papa della carità organizzata — si cer-

cherebbe invano un tono di ostentata compiacenza. È altrettanto nelle cronache delle abbazie benedettine e dei grandi Ordini, vere centrali della carità nel medioevo ed oltre.

Per trovare la vanità della 'carità organizzata — ciò che non avvenne sotto Benedetto XV, il silenzioso, durante la prima guerra mondiale, nè sotto Pio XI, in occasione delle carestie russe — bisogna attendere sino a questi recentissimi anni del secondo conflitto intercontinentale e soprattutto del dopoguerra, quando dalle minestre dei *Refettori del Papa* a ogni altra attività della Pontificia Commissione d'Assistenza, tutto parve assumere il tono d'una chiassosa e interessata campagna elettorale. Nessun dubbio che nell'intenzione del Pontefice e dei migliori «cooperatori» dell'opera non si voleva solo questo, ma l'impressione suggerita dalla stentorea campagna giornalistica e partitica oltre che dalla ributtante retorica di tanti galoppini e dagli untuosi commenti osannanti del clero (vescovi in testa) è stata concordemente la stessa. L'organizzazione della P. C. A. (dovuta a mons. Ferdinando Baldelli) è in se stessa degna d'ogni lode. Con un corpo burocratico minimo d'un paio di centinaia d'impiegati al centro, essa coordina un movimento periferico che raggiunge dai due ai tre milioni d'assistiti (un milione e mezzo soltanto erano i ragazzi assistiti nelle colonie estive del '49). E tra i beneficiati si va dai braccianti del Mezzogiorno ai pastori dell'Abruzzo e della Sardegna, dai detenuti agli operai dei cantieri, dai bambini agli universitari. Un complesso letteralmente imponente d'opere sorte nell'immediato dopoguerra

(una volta conclusa l'assistenza a carattere essenzialmente bellico, destinata ai profughi, prigionieri, senza tetto, ecc.) e tuttora in sviluppo. Ma il cui torto è stato di fare troppo rumore, di sbandierare troppe bandiere bianco-gialle e slogan demagogici, sia pure nel segno d'amore del Papa.

Vi sono, tuttavia, anche dei pericoli potenziali, emersi soprattutto nel recente « Convegno della Carità » (autunno 1950) che è doveroso segnalare. A conclusione di detto Convegno « per fissare sul terreno giuridico-sociale — come si esprimeva la mozione dovuta al Baldelli — i punti fondamentali da tenere presenti nei rapporti tra la società civile e la Chiesa come Carità » si affermò: « a) che alla Chiesa deve essere riconosciuta e garantita la piena libertà nei riguardi dell'assistenza dei fedeli cattolici e di quanti vogliono usufruire delle sue istituzioni; b) che alla Chiesa specialmente nei paesi di maggioranza cattolica deve essere riconosciuta e garantita (per tutto quanto si riferisce alla disciplina morale e religiosa) un'azione direttrice anche nelle istituzioni assistenziali di carattere pubblico e statale; c) che lo Stato deve contribuire in forma globale e proporzionale al mantenimento delle opere cattoliche che assolvono compiti di assistenza pubblica; d) che nelle organizzazioni internazionali deve essere riconosciuta alla Chiesa la dignità eminente e la efficienza incomparabile del suo spirito e della sua organizzazione; e) che il concetto informatore di tutte le attività assistenziali pubbliche nel campo nazionale come in quello internazionale deve essere quello dettato dalla carità di Cristo ». Dove (e non solo nel contenuto,

ma anche nel tono, imperativo) è più che mai evidente lo slittamento intenzionale sul terreno sociale e politico e quindi la più aberrante corruzione delle ambizioni apostoliche d'un'attività che, tra tutte quelle esercitate dalla Chiesa, dovrebbe essere la più umile e la più casta. Per quanto riguarda in particolare la P. C. A., essa tende ora, negli sforzi del suo organizzatore, a ottenere l'abdicazione ufficiale dello Stato alle sue funzioni assistenziali (« ufficiale » perchè sul piano dei fatti lo Stato italiano ha già abdicato) e ad essere riconosciuta come organo stabile della Chiesa da parte della S. Sede, anche per allargare e coordinare le attività assistenziali cattoliche su un piano internazionale. Coi principi sopra riferiti (specie col secondo), non dovrebbe essere lontano il tempo in cui gli stati, dopo la « questione mista » della scuola confessionale, dovranno difendersi dalle aggressioni caritative della Chiesa di Cristo !

AZIONE SOCIALE

Anche i principî orientativi sulla questione sociale, formulati per la prima volta nella Storia della Chiesa da Leone XIII, sono oggi più che mai oggetto d'una propaganda incalzante da parte dei propagandisti d'A. C. e democristiani. E non c'è evidentemente nulla da recriminare. Tutto quello che maliziosamente si potrebbe dire è che non hanno brillato di molta tempestività. La *Rerum Novarum* infatti è del 1891, postuma, cioè, di oltre mezzo secolo ai primi movimenti socialisti (piuttosto romantici e mitegianti, in verità) e di oltre

quarant'anni al Manifesto di Marx-Engels; peggio ancora, posteriore di molti decenni al vituperevole sfruttamento delle classi operaie da parte del primo capitalismo industriale europeo. O anche che, una volta enunciati, rimasero semiarchiviati per altri decenni, sinchè, nella *Quadragesimo anno*, Pio XI non li rispolverò per il primo. E addirittura sepolti nel dimenticatoio sono ancor oggi soprattutto per quanto riguarda la prassi dei membri del Clero e dei loro collaboratori tra i quali non esiste o quasi alcun senso di giustizia sociale e di rispetto della persona umana (vedi grandi sperequazioni di benefici, paghe inadeguate, assenza assoluta di assistenza sanitaria, di assicurazioni, ecc.).

Sta il fatto che nella Chiesa la mentalità della carità (come elemosina del (minimo) superfluo) ha per secoli e secoli sostituito totalmente il senso della giustizia sociale e ancor oggi domina la maggior parte dei « fedeli », rendendo difficoltosissima la penetrazione della verità. Per secoli e secoli i cristiani han vissuto in un mondo di fragranti e ostentate ingiustizie sociali senza mai sentirsi tentati di ribellione, contenti dei pannicelli tepidi che avevan la soddisfazione di deporre di quando in quando sui corpi piagati o macilenti dei loro beneficiati, ed entusiasticamente ligi a una classe dominante che proteggeva il loro quieto vivere e soprattutto s'inchinava compunta davanti ai suoi altari. E così han finito per concedere il primato della seconda virtù cardinale ai loro stessi « nemici » (espressione molto dolce alle labbra « cattoliche »). Il tradimento della giustizia, perpetrato dall'ottusa acquiescenza dei cristiani è dunque l'*unico* respon-

sabile delle lotte religiose in cui, nel mondo moderno, sono cadute masse intere. Ma non bisogna essere ingiusti e imprecisi: i cristiani colpevoli sono certo anche nella massa, ma soprattutto in quel clero aulico che si prostituiva nelle corti e in quella Curia dove il dolore degli umili non trovava via per penetrare e rivelarsi.

Certo, non è cosa semplice scrivere una storia della carità realizzata dalla Chiesa, ma è quasi inconcepibile elaborare quella delle sue lotte sociali: la prima per troppo materiale a disposizione, la seconda per la sua mancanza. Un apologista contemporaneo, Frank Sheed, in un contraddittorio a Hyde Park, all'eterna obbiezione — « son due mila anni che c'è il cristianesimo, eppure guardate com'è il mondo! », — non seppe che rispondere questa battuta di spirito, felice certo quanto a umorismo, ma affatto meschina come risposta: « Son venti milioni di anni che c'è l'acqua, eppure, guarda il tuo collo! ». I « nemici » della Chiesa sul terreno sociale avranno le mani sporche, magari di sangue, ma, se non altro, le han messe per primi all'opera...

ATTIVISMO POLITICO

Anche la storia politica della Chiesa o, più ristrettamente, quella delle sue predilezioni politiche, assai più facile delle precedenti, non è la più felice. Tanto più che a tutte le precedenti esperienze ha posto recentemente il più raccapriccianti fastigio con la moda dei concordati.

La caduta più esiziale della Chiesa, infatti, non

tanto nell'essersi venduta a indegne alleanze quando d'aver accettato il gioco delle alleanze, sporcanosi le mani sacerdotali con il più terrestre commercio, quello della politica.

Si pensi come si vuole sulla questione delle origini del potere temporale dei Papi, la soluzione da parte della vera Chiesa di Cristo sarebbe stata quella di non trattenereselo un sol istante nelle mani. Per l'Italia in ispecie (e tralasciamo la sua millenaria esistenza) la sua caduta per violenza (e non per generosa cessione) è valsa sessant'anni d'una crisi che solo in motivi politici ha attinto i suoi pretesti. Il 20 settembre del 1870 avrebbe dovuto segnare per la Chiesa romana una data di riconoscenza: fu invece un giorno di lutto e di mal smentita disdetta. Il capriccio dell'autocarcerazione durò sino all'11 febbraio del '29, ma, dietro quel paravento d'inaccidito puntiglio, i pontefici prepararono con abile trasformismo la sostituzione della politica di potenza territoriale con quella di potenza spirituale. Mutava cioè la base del commercio, ma non il commercio.

Sulla opportunità dei concordati esistono scritti a centinaia e non vogliamo proprio noi riproporre qui la spinosa ma in fondo anche molto semplice questione. Se preferiamo quella della laicità dello Stato è perchè vogliamo associarci alla tesi del cattolico Maritain come alla più vicina alle nostre pre-dilezioni. Il Maritain infatti ha osato, unico forse tra gli studiosi della sua confessione, la critica più sostanziale alla concezione cristiano-sacrale dello stato propria del Medioevo, contrapponendole l'ideale storico d'una nuova civiltà cristiana che ne

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fosse la completa antitesi (struttura pluralistica contro unità organica massimale; autonomia del temporale contro la sua subordinazione e l'impiego del suo apparato per fini spirituali; unità sociale di razza contro l'eterogenità e la gerarchicità delle razze sociali; realizzazione d'una comunità fraterna come opera comune contro l'assurda edificazione d'un impero terreno del Cristo). Sbarazzato il campo da tutti gli errori relativi alla confusione dei concetti di « Regno », « Chiesa » e « mondo », e prendendo abilmente l'avvio da un prezioso testo di Leone XIII, secondo il quale l'autorità dello Stato è suprema nel suo ordine, egli rivendicò ne *l'Humanisme intégral* l'essenziale laicità dello Stato giungendo alla nozione di « *città laica* in modo vitale cristiana o di Stato laico cristianamente costituito, cioè di uno Stato nel quale il profano e il temporale abbiano pienamente il loro compito e la loro dignità di fine o di agente principale più elevato » ⁽¹⁾. Solo in tal modo, infatti, il termine « laico » (sinonimo, per il Maritain, di profano) non è più equivoco: mentre nelle altre accezioni o ha solo un significato tautologico « la laicità nello Stato volendo dire in questo caso che lo Stato non è la Chiesa — o in senso errato, la laicità dello Stato volendo dire allora che lo Stato è neutro o antireligioso, cioè al servizio di fini puramente materiali o d'una controreligione » ⁽²⁾. Ma solo così soprattutto si salvaguarda l'indipendenza del potere statale

⁽¹⁾ v. *Umanesimo Integrale*, tr. it. nelle Ed.i Studium, 1947, p. 142.

⁽²⁾ Op. cit., ivi.

da quello religioso pur ammettendolo indirettamente subordinato. Il Maritain, da buon cattolico, sottolinea anche la sua opposizione alla concezione liberale perchè, se nel Medioevo l'idea del Sacro Romano Impero si basava sulla potenza teocratica della Chiesa, nel liberalismo la libertà « è solo la caricatura e a volte nient'altro che la derisione della libertà ». In concreto, quindi, lo Stato, secondo il Maritain, deve una subordinazione reale ed effettiva alla Chiesa — e ciò in contrasto con le moderne concezioni liberali e gallicane —, ma una subordinazione che non deve in alcun modo avere la forma di semplice ministerialità, come si pretendeva invece nel Medioevo. Subordinazione morale perciò e solo qualora la maggioranza dei cittadini fosse di fede cattolica. Il Maritain, infatti, è sensibilissimo al problema delle minoranze religiose negli Stati cattolici. Egli conosce troppo bene le pretese della Chiesa. « La Chiesa cattolica insiste sul principio che la verità deve avere il sopravvento sull'errore e che la vera religione, quando essa è conosciuta, deve essere aiutata nella sua missione spirituale di preferenza alle religioni in cui il messaggio è più o meno manchevole e in cui l'errore si mescola con la verità. È questa una semplice conseguenza di ciò che l'uomo deve alla verità ». Subito però aggiunge: « Sarebbe tuttavia assai falso concludere che questo principio non può applicarsi che reclamando per la vera religione i favori di un potere assolutistico o l'assistenza delle persecuzioni e che la Chiesa rivendichi dalle società moderne i privilegi che ha goduti in una civiltà di tipo sacrale come quella del Medio Evo. È la mis-

sione spirituale della Chiesa che deve essere aiutata, non la potenza politica o i vantaggi temporali che questi o quelli fra i suoi membri potrebbero prendere in suo nome. E nello stato di evoluzione e di coscienza di sè al quale sono giunte le società moderne, una discriminazione sociale e politica in favore della Chiesa e la concessione di privilegi temporali ai suoi ministri o ai suoi fedeli o una politica di clericalismo sarebbero precisamente di natura tale da compromettere, anzichè aiutare, tale missione spirituale; così pure la corruzione della religione dall'interno alla quale lavorano oggi i dittatori di tipo totalitario-clericale, è peggiore della persecuzione. Per il fatto stesso che la società politica ha più perfettamente differenziato la propria sfera e il suo oggetto temporale e riunisce di fatto nel suo bene comune temporale uomini appartenenti a famiglie religiose differenti, è divenuto necessario che, sul piano temporale, il principio dell'uguaglianza dei diritti s'applichi a tali differenti famiglie. Non vi è che un bene comune temporale: quello della società politica; come non vi è che un bene comune soprannaturale: quello del regno di Dio, che è sovrapolitico. Introdurre nella società politica un bene comune particolare che sarebbe il bene comune temporale dei fedeli di una religione, fosse anche della vera religione, la quale reclamasse per essi una situazione privilegiata nello Stato, sarebbe introdurre un principio di divisione nella società politica e venir meno pertanto al bene comune temporale. È una concezione pluralistica che, sulla base dell'uguaglianza dei diritti, assicura le libertà proprie delle diverse famiglie religiose

istituzionalmente riconosciute e lo statuto del loro inserimento nella vita civile. Tale concezione è chiamata — crediamo — a prendere il posto, sia della concezione clericale dell'epoca joseffista, sia della concezione liberale dell'epoca borghese, e ad armonizzare gli interessi dello spirituale e quelli del temporale in ciò che concerne le questioni miste (civili-religiose), in particolare quella della scuola. In un paese a struttura religiosa come la Francia, la Chiesa cattolica trarrebbe da una tale organizzazione una forza di irradamento spirituale particolare, per il fatto della preponderanza della sua autorità morale e del suo dinamismo religioso. Non è in situazione giuridica privilegiata, è nel diritto d'eguaglianza cristiana, che essa troverebbe un'assistenza particolarmente appropriata alla sua opera. Non è accordando alla Chiesa un trattamento di favore e cercando di agganciarsela con vantaggi temporali pagati col prezzo della sua libertà che lo Stato la aiuterebbe maggiormente nella sua missione spirituale, ma domandandole di più — domandando ai suoi preti di andare verso le masse e di congiungersi alla loro vita per diffonder tra esse il fermento del Vangelo e per aprire i tesori della Liturgia al mondo del lavoro e alle sue feste —; domandando ai suoi ordini religiosi di cooperare alle opere di assistenza sociale e d'educazione della comunità civile, ai suoi militanti laici e alle sue organizzazioni giovanili di aiutare il lavoro morale della nazione e di sviluppare nella vita sociale il senso della libertà e della fraternità ». (¹)

(¹) v. *Cristianesimo e Dem.*, ed. cit. pp. 95-98.

Concezione questa indubbiamente audace, ma di profondo oltre che saggio equilibrio e di originale attualità, che chiunque non può non approvare; e che soprattutto le gerarchie ecclesiastiche romane e il clero dovrebbero meditare. Perciò abbiamo trascritto per intero la lunga citazione senza esitazione alcuna.

LE METE

Anche una così sommaria analisi critica dell'azione della Chiesa è sufficiente per orientare sul senso e sulla consistenza delle sue ambizioni. Unità santità cattolicità apostolicità — sono le rivendicazioni apertamente dichiarate dallo stesso Simbolo. Ma si sa che non sempre si riesce a camminare sulle vette. E che i compromessi sono tanto più fatali quanto più complesso è il gioco degli interessi, siano pure i più trascendenti.

Che la Chiesa si sia compaginata in un imponente organismo unitario soprattutto nell'ultimo secolo, lo si è ripetuto più volte in questo scritto. Tutt'al più si dovrebbe analizzare la lega di quest'amalgama. Ma è cosa che, almeno per il momento, non ci interessa. (Gli attriti tra alto e piccolo clero aumentatisi negli ultimi anni, come le beghe di rivalità tra sacerdoti secolari e religiosi, e quelle anche più grette tra ordini religiosi, specie se delle stesse famiglie, e le stesse rivendicazioni dei laici contro lo strafare dei preti — tanto per accennare a qualche crepa —, sarebbero pretesti troppo meschini per calunniare un colosso che, se sopravvive, lo deve soprattutto alla concorde volontà dei suoi

membri, al di là di queste troppo naturali frizioni accidentali). Come non ci interessa qui la legittimità della rivendicata origine apostolica, che si può senz'altro avallare. Piuttosto ci sarebbe a ridire sulla conclamata santità della Chiesa Romana. Certo a convincerci non sono le annuali canonizzazioni di qualche suo membro o, peggio, le eloquenti virtù dei prelati e dei laici di privata e personale conoscenza. Ma checchè si voglia opporre, bisogna onestamente riconoscere che le virtù del Cristo emanano tuttora prodigi dalle vesti della Chiesa cattolica. Come, del resto, anche se, forse, in minor copia, da quelle delle confessioni protestanti e ortodosse. La rivoluzione spirituale più profonda della storia dell'umanità, non c'è dubbio, è stata quella cristiana. Che l'umanità intera, quindi, si lasci permeare e potenziare dal lievito evangelico non può essere che il desiderio di tutti. Forse lo stesso processo politico di assimilazione dei più dissensi e differenziati continenti, che sembra accelerare i tempi in questi ultimi anni, è anche in funzione di una più vasta intesa religiosa che si attuerà immancabilmente con reciproche interferenze e concessioni. L'intransigenza così caratteristica di ogni fede è più che mai destinata a scomparire non in un superficiale eclettismo, ma in una sintesi organica e profonda dei comuni valori supremi pur nella libera sopravvivenza di forme e tradizioni, oltre che suggestive, feconde e preziose.

E quella sarà la vera Chiesa del Cristo, la vera « ecumene » di cui Egli parlò nel discorso-testamento del Giovedì Santo. La chiesa di Gesù infatti non può essere che cattolica. E cattolica nel senso

più pregnante della parola: per universalità geografica, etnica, temporale e d'influenza permeatrice. Eguale, cioè, all'immensità dell'universo, all'immensità del tempo, all'immensità di tutte le aspirazioni del pensiero e del cuore dell'uomo. Un'autentica organizzazione, insomma, dell'infinito. Niente di più probabile che tale unità possa essere realizzata soprattutto ad opera della Chiesa cattolica, ma a patto ch'essa abbandoni la grettezza e l'angustia dell'intransigenza che oggi la distinguono.

Infatti se c'è attualmente un peccato capitale nella condotta della Chiesa romana, questo è senza dubbio la sua orgogliosa e cieca intransigenza. La giustificazione è nota: si tratta, secondo essa, di non compromettere nulla di quello che è il deposito di verità e di grazia affidatole dal suo Fondatore. Ciò che sarebbe vero se il suo farraginoso apparato di dogmi, precetti etici, disposizioni culturali ecc. le fosse davvero stato affidato da Cristo. Una volta trascinate su un terreno così contestabile, è ovvio che anche le altre confessioni cristiane s'irrigidiscono nei suoi confronti, se non altro pel dolore di non sentirsi comprese e di dover ancora procrastinare l'ora dell'unificazione.

Perchè questo è il paradossale: che l'unica Chiesa che si chiami orgogliosamente cattolica continui con metodicità esasperante a far naufragare tutti i tentativi di unione tra le confessioni cristiane che non accettino una resa totale su tutti i fronti. Si tratta, per la Curia di Roma, di stravincere facendo il vuoto attorno a sé. A nessun patto, mai, essa viene a condizioni. Eppure con quanta deferenza, ad esempio, gli organizzatori del primo grande Con-

vegno del Movimento Ecumenico, che ebbe poi luogo ad Amsterdam, nell'agosto del 1948, supplicarono Roma di partecipare a quella grandiosa assise della cristianità. Il loro appello aveva note davvero commoventi e strazianti. Roma vi era invitata come la più grande delle Chiese e senza che nulla le fosse chiesto di sacrificare di quanto essa così gelosamente tutela. Le si chiedeva soltanto di portare la sua collaborazione illuminata e fraterna in un'ora tanto tragica per il mondo, quando soltanto una grande crociata di amore e di unità promossa dal cristianesimo universale, prescindendo da ogni dissenso etico o dogmatico, poteva forse ancora salvarlo. La risposta del Vaticano fu la proibizione a tutti i cattolici laici e religiosi di prendervi parte e l'invio d'un curiale come osservatore.

L'eco nel mondo protestante e ortodosso, più che di scandalo, fu di sorpresa e di dolore. È vero che un'esperienza di decenni (per riferirsi alla più recente) dava per scontato un simile atteggiamento, ma si pensava che il tempo e soprattutto gli ultimi avvenimenti bellici non avessero lavorato invano, disponendo Roma a una maggiore remissività.

Un anno più tardi, un decreto della Congregazione Concistoriale sui rapporti tra cattolici e protestanti rendeva meno rigida la drastica disciplina precedente, ma senza migliorare sostanzialmente le condizioni di una proficua e mutua intesa.

Ad essere « la grande assente », è stato detto, la Chiesa romana non ha nulla da guadagnare. Meglio ancora: ha tutto da perdere. E forse, quando si deciderà a smettere le ormai troppo viete e grette

questioni di prestigio, sarà troppo tardi per lei, ma, speriamolo, non per il mondo.

Se non si fosse trattato di pura messinscena a scopo eminentemente propagandistico e diplomatico, i recenti rapporti col mondo islamico avrebbero potuto far pensare che la Curia fosse più propensa a patteggiare alleanze religiose con gli « infedeli » che coi « fratelli separati ». In realtà non ne è seguito niente di concreto, ma se qualcosa dovesse pur seguirne non sarebbe altro che a profitto del movimento missionario della Chiesa nei paesi del mondo orientale, profitto a non creder troppo nel quale la prima è la Chiesa cattolica stessa.

Quanto all'imponente sforzo missionario sostenuto dalla Chiesa negli ultimi due secoli e vivamente incrementato da Pio XI, pur con tutte le tare che accompagnano persino le più eroiche manifestazioni umane e pur nella sua pacifica apparenza di conquista, esso resta inconfutabilmente una delle espressioni più eloquenti della vitalità del Cristianesimo. Ma nel contempo rende ancor più incomprendibile l'atteggiamento di Roma verso le Chiese separate.

Forse la Chiesa cattolica obbedisce ormai contemporaneamente e come per forza d'inerzia a due forze: all'energia soprannaturale della fede e dell'amore che il suo Fondatore le ha partecipato e all'egoismo della propria conservazione e grandezza, creduto giustificato dall'esser la vera e quindi l'unica Chiesa di Cristo. Col paradossale risultato che Cristo continua ad aver diviso il suo ovile proprio ad opera dei custodi del suo gregge più scelto e numeroso.

IL DILEMMA

« È impossibile che le potenze terrene si pongano da se stesse in equilibrio: solo un terzo elemento, che sia contemporaneamente terreno e sovraterreno, può assolvere questo compito. Non si può concludere una pace tra le potenze combattenti, ogni pace è mera illusione, è un armistizio soltanto; dal punto di vista dei Gabinetti, della coscienza comune, non è pensabile alcuna unione. Entrambe le parti accampano pretese grandi e necessarie, e debbono sostenerle, agitate come sono dallo spirito del mondo e dell'umanità. Entrambe sono forze indistruttibili del cuore umano; qui il rispetto dell'antichità, l'attaccamento a una costituzione tradizionale, l'amore ai monumenti degli avi e all'antica e gloriosa famiglia dello Stato, la gioia dell'ubbidire: là l'entusiasmante sentimento della libertà, l'incondizionata aspettazione di potenti possibilità d'azione, il gusto del nuovo e del giovane, il libero contatto con tutti i cittadini del diritto personale e della proprietà del tutto e il potente sentimento dell'esser cittadino. Nessuno spera di annientare l'altro, tutte le conquiste qui non vogliono dire nulla, poichè l'intima capitale di ciascuno dei due reami non sta dietro trincea e non si può espugnare.

« Chissà se le guerre sono finite? Ma se non si afferra il ramo di palma che solo una potenza spirituale può offrire, esse non finiranno mai. Il sangue scorrerà sull'Europa finchè le nazioni non si accorgeranno della terribile follia che le agita in cerchio e, tocche e rese miti da una musica santa, non si accosteranno in variopinta mescolanza agli antichi altari, non imprenderanno opere di pace e non celebreranno con calde lacrime un gran banchetto d'amore, come festa di pace, sui fumanti campi di battaglia. Solo la religione può ridestare l'Europa, render sicuri i popoli e ristabilire, con nuova magnificenza, la cristianità visibile sulla terra nel suo antico uffizio di pacificatrice.

« Non hanno forse le nazioni tutto dall'uomo, eccetto il suo cuore, l'organo suo sacro? Non si rappacificano, come questi, presso le bare dei loro cari? Non dimenticano ogni inimicizia se la pietà divina parla loro e una sventura, uno strazio, un sentimento riempia i loro occhi di lacrime? Non le afferra con onnipotenza il bisogno del sacrificio e della dedizione e non aspirano a divenire amiche e alleate?

« Dov'è l'antica dolce fede del governo di Dio sulla terra, l'unica fede che renda beati? Dov'è quella celeste fiducia degli uomini tra loro, quella dolce emozione nelle effusioni di un animo infiammato da Dio, dov'è lo spirito universale della Cristianità? ». (¹)

Così Novalis un secolo e mezzo fa. Ma queste sue

(¹) v. *Cristianità o Europa*, tr. it. Einaudi, 1942, pp. 23-24.

celebri pagine sono oggi d'una ben più drammatica attualità. Perchè allora, semmai, si trattava delle inquiete convulsioni d'un solo continente: oggi è realmente e non metaforicamente il mondo intero, separato in due blocchi minaccianti l'un l'altro sterminio, che invoca, in nome della sua recente tragedia, l'intervento d'un paciere per scongiurare a qualsiasi costo la prossima. Oggi è il mondo intero diviso in due blocchi variamente equilibrati e forti, ma opposti non solo politicamente bensì anche religiosamente, giacchè l'uno — quello orientale — vuol portare alla vittoria il suo giovane e fanatico credo materialista e l'altro la sua antica ma faticante fede cristiana. Guerra di classi e di razze, dunque, quella che incombe sull'umanità, ma, ancora una volta, guerra di religione. E dalle cui ecatombe forse non sfuggiremo perchè ormai la parola non è più agli uomini, ma agli dei.

Infatti, il terzo elemento invocato da Novalis — quello della fede — poteva ancora agire nel secolo scorso. Il suo letargo, invece, è stato ormai fatale. L'unità cristiana, se effettuata allora, non avrebbe permesso il trionfo del materialismo ateo e la rivoluzione d'ottobre sarebbe stata sotto il segno di Cristo. Oggi lo stesso riaffratellamento delle Chiese, più che unilaterale e troppo tardivo, potrebbe essere interpretato in senso esclusivamente politico e minaccerebbe di scavare trincee spirituali anche più profonde di quelle belliche.

Che rimane dunque da fare? Espiare e purificarsi. Forse la purificazione potrebbe anche allontanare la prova. Ma purificarsi *insieme*, perchè tutti

si è più o meno colpevoli. E chi è più grande ha certo anche più gravi responsabilità.

Se è sempre stata auspicabile, quindi, una riforma della Chiesa, essa è tanto più urgente in quest'ora di crisi prebellica.

L'errore peggiore che la Chiesa potrebbe compiere in questo momento sarebbe quello di ricorrere ai soliti calcoli politici. Nell'ultimo conflitto, essa, indubbiamente, ha calcolato bene. Ma le fortune raramente si ripetono. Calcolare l'utilità delle alleanze è assurdo per una Chiesa che ha figli oltre l'una e l'altra trincea. La Chiesa non deve allearsi con nessun contendente. Nessuno ha le mani pulite. Qualunque sia il suo linguaggio, qualsiasi siano le sue lusinghe. La decisione dei torti e delle ragioni *in sede politica* non spetta a lei. E nessuno l'ha incaricata di gettare il peso della sua influenza morale a destra o a sinistra, in un conflitto che è soltanto di valori terrestri. Il Cristianesimo non è la civiltà cristiana così tarata del mondo occidentale, anche se lo è molto meno la civiltà materialistica del comunismo. Il Cristianesimo è al di là dell'una e dell'altra. E può darsi che la sua affermazione definitiva sia proprio oltre la fusione delle due forme oggi in contrasto.

Sottrattasi a una presa di posizione politica, la Chiesa deve poi realizzare contemporaneamente due compiti: spiritualizzarsi nella semplicità e unirsi nell'umiltà. Bandire, cioè, anzitutto, dalle sue strutture, tutte le superfluità inutili, tutti i burocratismi superflui e parassitari, tutte le bardature festaiole. Ridiventare, in una parola, *povera*. Povera di spirito,

accontentandosi d'una fede semplice e il meno possibile dialettica e casistica. Povera di desideri, lasciando ogni ambizione di primati, di successi mondani, di riconoscimenti terreni. Povera di affetti, non tenendo ad amicizie men che pure e men che vicine a Dio. Povera di beni, riducendo al massimo i suoi fasti e gli agi (anche soltanto appariscenti) dei suoi membri.

E poi, unirsi nell'umiltà. Realizzando anzitutto la più dolce e fondente comunione d'amore tra i suoi membri. Quindi, tra i suoi membri in atto e quelli potenziali. Infine, ricongiungendosi, dopo la lunga dolorosissima separazione, ai fratelli separati. Ma tutto questo fervore operoso deve svolgersi nel massimo silenzio. In quel silenzio in cui l'amore celebra i suoi riti più intimi e profondi di comunione e di dedizione.

Povertà e silenzio potrebbero essere infatti le parole motto della rinnovata Chiesa di Cristo. Parole in cui si riassumerebbe felicemente, come in nessun'altre, l'ideale assegnatole da Cristo, quando la gettò, simile al seme più piccolo e spregevole, nel silenzioso e miserabile terriccio del deserto palestinese.

Se il paradosso del Cristianesimo è nello spirito delle beatitudini come spirito per eccellenza antimondano, il paradosso della Chiesa non può essere che quello di vivere in pieno i valori sovvertitori del discorso della montagna.

Sinora la Chiesa s'è troppo assimilata alla mentalità e alla tattica delle potenze mondane. Deve tornare alla sua semplicità povertà e silenziosità d'origine. Allora, forse, il mondo, vedendo risplen-

dere di nuovo su di sè il prodigo orifiammante della Croce, potrà fermarsi sul ciglio del baratro in cui sta per piombare o alzare di laggiù il suo grido implorante all'unico samaritano che Iddio gli abbia lasciato a fianco.

Tale infatti è ancora una volta il vero dilemma per la Chiesa Romana: o ricombaciare coll'ideale del suo Fondatore o perire. Ed essa non perirà, se cercherà nella sua riforma interiore e nella riunione alle altre Chiese del Cristo e a tutte le grandi fedi storiche quelle forze taumaturgiche che il suo Fondatore le ha consegnato non tanto per sè quanto per la salvezza del mondo.

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**E D I T O A C U R A D E L L A
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PREFACE.

The Compiler having been many years in the service of the U. S., became impressed, after a long course of experience and observation, with the necessity and convenience of having a printed manual, (in lieu of written regulations by the captain, which are now customary in our service,) prescribing some of the most important duties for the *discipline*, *police*, and *sanitary* government of a Men-of-War. From this compendium the young officers may take an internal view of the duties to be performed on board vessels of war. The only compensation the compiler expects for the trouble and expense of the work, is the hope that it may prove useful.

NAVAL RULES.

ARTICLE 1. The strictest attention must be paid to the orders issued by the Navy Department, by the order of the President of the United States.

ART. 2. Every superior officer is directed to exact upon all occasions, from his inferiors, unequivocal, and respectful compliance with his orders; and it is expected of all his inferiors, that they do not neglect, any exterior marks of respect, whenever they address, or are addressed, by a superior; as also to check those under them, of every impropriety they may see, or hear of their committing, either wilfully, or ignorantly, and to notify the commanding officer of the same.

ART. 3. After the ship's crew are completed, and the watches equally divided, each watch is subdivided, so as to make the quarter watches as nearly equal as possible; the mariners with the non-commissioned officers, are, like the rest of the ship's crew, to be equally divided into half and quarter watches.

ART. 4. The ship's crew are to be messed in messes of ten each; the men by themselves, and the petty officers by themselves; the men of different messes are, on every Monday morning, to appoint one of their messmates to keep their berths, cooking utensils, &c., clean, and in proper order during the succeeding week: such are to be responsible to the officers for any neglect they may discover, and none but men belonging to the boats, when in harbor, are to be exempt from this duty.

ART. 5. The time by the glass, must be regularly attended to, as well by night, as by day, and the bell must be struck every half hour.

ART. 6. The log is to be hove every hour, and the rate of sailing, courses, winds, currents, ripples, and occurrences,

instantly marked on the log-board, and at noon of each day the same are to be entered in the log-book, by the master or his mate.

ART. 7. On seeing vessels of any description whatever, or appearances not usual, as also on a change of wind, or weather, by night, or day, the captain must immediately be informed.

ART. 8. A sharp look-out must be kept by night, and by day, and the officers are always to cause the cannon and ropes of every description to be kept clear, and to have every man at his station.

ART. 9. Pumps are to be sounded every half hour, by the carpenter's mates, and the ship pumped out, whenever there are four inches more water in the well than she sucks at.

ART. 10. Officers of every rank are expected, when duty requires them at quarters, or at their different stations, to be very attentive to preserve silence among the men, and see the orders issued from the quarter-deck, executed with celerity, and without noise or confusion.

ART. 11. Officers will upon all occasions encourage, and pointedly distinguish those men, who are particularly cleanly, active, alert, and obedient, from those of a contrary character, in order that the deserving may see that their merits are not disregarded, as well as the undeserving to be made sensible of the vigilance of their officers, and the advantage resulting from good and respectful conduct.

ART. 12. Blasphemy, profaneness, and every species of obscenity or immorality, are strictly forbidden, and it is hoped that officers of every grade, will upon all occasions discountenance and discourage such disorderly and despicable practices amongst the ship's company.

ART. 13. The commanding deck officer is to avoid, as much as possible, the calling of all hands, unless the service to be performed cannot be executed by the watch and idlers.

ART. 14. The officers and petty officers are required to make themselves personally acquainted with the ship's company, in order that they may address them by their proper names, or sailor, but never "you, sir!" as it is degrading so to address a man.

ART. 15. During the summer months, when in port, the awnings are to be spread every morning, as soon as the decks are dry, if the weather and other duties will permit, and they are to remain so throughout the day.

ART. 16. At sea, or in harbor, a lieutenant of the ship, or master, is always to be on the quarter-deck, in charge, together with two midshipmen, and quarter-masters, except the ship is in harbor, and so situated that no such danger is to be apprehended from winds, currents, or an enemy, as to render it necessary to keep the regular half, or quarter watch of the crew; in which case, the commanding officer will give orders accordingly.

ART. 17. The honor due to the quarter-deck cannot be dispensed with; on entering it, either from below, or a boat, a polite and decent deportment from one officer to another is expected, as the character of an officer and a gentleman can never be separated.

ART. 18. The time, by the glass, is to be regulated every day, by the sun, or the captain's watch, at 8. P. M.

ART. 19. The health of the ship's company being of the first consideration and importance, every possible attention must be paid to promote the same, for which purpose the hammocks must always be got up in the morning, by seven bells, or otherwise, as soon as circumstances of duty will permit, and never to be piped down until sunset, (when it can be avoided,) in order that a free circulation of air may be preserved on the berth-deck as long as possible. With this object in view, during the summer months, in a tropical climate, all those who are turned out in their regular watches, will, previously to coming on deck, lash up their hammocks. The quarter-deck is always to be kept clear of clothes, lumber, and dirt, and the ropes hung on the pins.

ART. 20. No improper language to be used on the quarter-deck

ART. 21. No duty is to be performed on Sunday, that can be avoided; but on extraordinary occasions, except such as washing the deck, and working the ship, trimming sails, &c. Divine service must be performed at 10, A. M., by the chaplain, at which all hands must be present, dressed and clean.

ART. 22. The warrant and petty officers, together with the seamen, ordinary seamen, and marines, are to breakfast at 8, A. M., and have their dinner regularly at meridian; one hour is allowed them at each meal, when at sea; the common duty for which all hands are employed, is to be concluded at 4, P. M., daily.

ART. 23. Every morning, the master, boatswain, and gunner, are to examine the rigging, fore and aft; also, from each mast head, down, and report to the 1st lieutenant its condition.

ART. 24. All lights, except such as the captain especially shall suffer, are to be *put out* every evening, at 8 o'clock, in the winter, and 9, in the summer; the officer of the watch, a lieutenant, may, however, on some occasions, permit a light below, in a lantern, but he will be held *responsible* for any improper use that may be made of this indulgence. The winter regulations are to commence on the 22d September, and end on the 21st of March; the summer regulations are to continue the other six months of the year.

ART. 25. No fire is to be allowed in the galley after 8 o'clock, P. M., in winter, or 9, in the summer, except such as may be necessary for the lighting of matches, and making preparations for battle.

ART. 26. The keys of all the warrant officers' store rooms will be kept by the 1st lieutenant, who will direct them to be returned to him before sunset, every afternoon, when he is to examine that no lights have been left burning in the passages and rooms, and that the doors are locked, and examine all other parts of the ship where lights are used in the day time, and report to the captain, at 8, P. M. The keys of the hold are to be kept by the master, who is never to suffer the hatches to be unlocked without his knowledge, and to take care that one of his mates attend, who is always to be the last person out of the hold, in order that no accident arise from lights, and that they be carefully locked. The marine officers, surgeon, purser, will have charge of the keys of their respective store-rooms, and will be held responsible for any accident that may happen therein, from neglect of lights or otherwise.

ART. 27. Whenever all hands are called, no person is to go below, from his station, upon pretence of the work being done, before the watch is piped down.

ART. 28. The decks are to be washed in the morning watch, when the gun-carriages, port-sills, quick work, head, and head rails, channels, sides, and all other wood work, to be washed by the carpenter and his crew, and great care must be taken that the decks are well dried. In port, the necessary boats are to be lowered down after the decks are washed, or before, if the commanding officer thinks proper ; the yards neatly squared, ropes hauled taught, and not a rope yarn to be seen flying about the yards or rigging ; hammocks neatly stowed, and pipe to breakfast at 8, A. M., precisely.

ART. 29. The officers will see that the men do not perform the ordinary duty of the ship in their best clothes, and when employed washing decks, they will make them pull off their shoes and stockings, and tuck up their trowsers.

ART. 30. The hammocks belonging to those absent on duty, or liberty, are to be lashed-up and taken up by the men berthed next to them ; if the outside man should be absent, the next man within him is to perform that service.

ART. 31. When the weather is so bad that the hammocks cannot be stowed in the nettings, they are to be piled up in such places as the 1st lieutenant shall appoint.

ART. 32. No seamen, or marines, are to be permitted to go out of the ship on leave, who shall not, upon close examination by their officer, be found clean and properly dressed.

ART. 35. Upon the loss of any clothes, bedding, money, or other articles, the loser is immediately to make known to the officer of the watch, or the commanding officer, who is to take such measures as may be proper to discover the thief ; no man is permitted to appropriate to himself any clothes, or other articles, that he may at any time find about the ship, for if he cannot find the owner, he is commanded to take them to the officer of the watch, on the quarter-deck.

ART. 34. Boat's crews are commanded to obey with as much punctuality and alacrity the orders of their coxswain, as those of any officer on board.

ART. 35. Boats are not to be left at any time without boat-keepers ; they are not allowed to lie at the gangway, nor even alongside of the ship, when they can conveniently be moored astern, or at the guiswarp.

ART. 36. In foreign port, a boat is to be sent on shore every evening, to bring off whoever may be absent on leave, which is to haul-off at sunset for the ship.

ART. 37. When at sea, the crew will be musteréd at quarters every evening, half an hour before piping down the hammocks ; and the officers will see that wads, matches, and all other necessary apparatus are properly provided, the men present dressed in blue cloth jackets, and sober, and the guns in perfect order for immediate action ; at the same time the 1st lieutenant is to see that the slings of the different yards, preventer-braces, stoppers, &c., are perfect, and the ship completely ready for battle, and report to the captain.

ART. 38. No man is to be confined by day, or night, when the captain is on board, without his order : which order must be registered on the book of crimes and offences.

ART. 39. The master at arms is to keep a list of the boys, and of their clothes, and to have an especial eye to their conduct, habits, and cleanliness ; every morning, at 7, A. M., he is to take care that they are assembled in the gangway, attended by himself, and one of the ship's corporals, when, after having been inspected, he is to report them to the officer of the deck, and receive his orders.

ART. 40. No midshipman is to leave the deck at the expiration of the watch, under the pretence that there is no one to relieve him, without having made such representations to the officer of the watch, and having his permission for so doing. No officer is to sleep out of the ship, without the consent of the captain.

ART. 41. The salt meats are to be delivered out every evening before sunset, to the cook, who is accountable for, and must have the same washed and soaked, by changing the water every four hours, in the steep tub.

ART. 42. The boats must be hoisted up, or securely moored every night, before it is dark, or by 8 o'clock, at all events, unless on ship duty.

ART. 43. Any man finding himself ill, is to make known his complaint (without loss of time,) to the surgeon, or one of his mates, as no excuse for neglect of duty, on the score of illness, will be received, but through the surgeon, or his mate.

ART. 44. The 1st lieutenant, whether at sea, or in harbor, is to visit the ship throughout, every forenoon, at 10, A. M., and see that the tiers, cockpit, wings, store rooms, passages, are clean, and in a proper condition, and report to the captain as ready for his inspection.

ART. 45. The ship's crew is expected to be clean, shaved, and dressed, every Sunday morning by 10, A. M., when they will be mustered by the captain ; and it is ordered, that all officers will be present, except such as are absent on duty, sick, or on leave.

ART. 46. The first Monday in every month is appointed for a general inspection of clothes, when the division officers are expected to examine very particularly into the people's clothing, and bedding, and to report to the 1st lieutenant any deficiencies that may appear, who is to report the same to the captain, in case such deficiency is of magnitude.

ART. 47. Every man belonging to the ship, is expected to provide himself with the following clothing : 1 hat, 2 neck handkerchiefs, 3 shirts, 2 jackets, 3 pants, 2 pairs of shoes, monkey jacket, 1 mattress, 2 blankets, bag, and hammock.

ART. 48. No person is allowed to lounge in the ports, or chains ; it is strictly forbidden to throw any dirty water, or dirt, out of the ports ; dirt of all kinds is to be taken to the head, and started into the shoot.

ART. 49. The midshipmen, and master's mates, are required to sling in hammocks, which are to be brought upon deck, and taken down, at the same time the ship's crew are.

ART. 50. From the 21st of March, to the 21st of September, the colors are to be hoisted at 8, P. M. ; and from the 21st of September, to the 21st of March, they are to be hoisted at 9, A. M., and hauled down at sunset ; never to be kept flying in stormy weather, but a small flag must be substituted.

ART. 51. Whenever, in the opinion of the officer of the

deck, there is an approaching thunder squall, the conductors are to be let down into the water, and well boomed off from the ship's side

ART. 52. Whenever the captain is out of the ship, and is expected on board, at night, two lights are to be hoisted at the mizen peak.

ART. 53. As soon after meridian as practicable, while at sea, the lieutenants, master and midshipmen, are required to send in their reckoning for the day, containing courses, distance, departure, difference of latitude, difference of longitudes, latitude by observation, latitude by account, difference of longitude, longitude by dead reckoning, longitude by lunlar observation, and by chronometer. All commission and warranted officers are required to observe the sun at noon.

ART. 54. The master-at-arms is to report to the captain, in writing, or in the absence of the captain, to the commanding officer, every morning, at 9 A. M., in the summer, at 10 A. M., in the winter, the number of persons confined, with remarks relative to their conduct while in confinement, their names, date when confined, their offence, by whom confined, and at whose instigation.

ART. 55. One division of guns, alternately, commencing with the first division, is to be exercised every morning, for one hour, between the hour of 10, and noon, at which time the officer commanding the division must be present, who is to see that every apparatus belonging to the guns which are used in action, are supplied before the exercises commence.

ART. 56. There is at no time, without the captain's especial permission, to be more than one-fourth of the watch officers absent from the ship.

ART. 57. After the station bills are completed, it will be the duty of the 1st lieutenant to keep them so; no alterations are to be made therein, without the captain's knowledge and approbation.

ART. 58. No stores, or other articles, are to be received on board without a bill and receipt given for them by the officer to whose department they belong, and noted on the log-board, by the officer of the deck.

ART. 59. Four minutes, and no more, will be allowed for piping hammocks up, till they are completely stowed; the same time will be allowed for taking them down, and slinging them up.

ART. 60. No seaman, ordinary seaman, marine, or boy, will be allowed to go on shore, without the captain's permission, except the market boys.

ART. 61. Boats, and men returning from shore, are to be very strictly examined by the master-at-arms, and ship's corporal, under the inspection of the officer of the deck, who will be held responsible for any liquor which may find its way on board during his watch; and liquor found in the boats, or on the men, being obtained without permission, is to be thrown overboard, and the person, or persons, found guilty of bringing it on board, to be put in charge of the master-at-arms, and reported forthwith to the captain, or commanding officer.

ART. 62. No person (the 1st lieutenant and surgeon excepted,) is to water a man's grog for more than three days, without the captain's approbation.

ART. 63. No punishment is to be inflicted during the absence of the captain. The delinquent is to be confined to the care of the master-at-arms.

ART. 64. If an officer shall observe any misconduct in his superior, or shall suffer any personal *indignity, oppression, or injustice*, he is not on that account to fail in any degree in respect due his superior, but he is to represent such misconduct, or ill treatment, to the captain of the ship to which he belongs, and through him to the commander-in-chief, as circumstance may require; all, however, must pass through his captain, and go to the commander-in-chief, or the secretary of the navy.

DUTIES OF THE FIRST LIEUTENANT.

The 1st lieutenant having the general superintendance, as a day officer, giving his particular personal attendance from sunrise to 8, P. M.; he is to keep complete quarter, watch, and station bills; they are to be hung in the most public place in the ship, and every person is to be perfect in his station.

The master, gunner, boatswain, carpenter, and sail maker, will give to the 1st lieutenant, each Sunday, a return of their weekly expenditure, which will be countersigned by him, and delivered to the captain.

No powder, or cartridges containing powder, are to be kept in the store-rooms, or passages, nor are fire-arms or powder ever to be taken out of the ship, without order of the captain.

No article belonging to the ship is to be converted to any other purpose than that for which it was intended, nor any expenditure of stores, without the express order of the captain, or 1st lieutenant.

When at sea, the gunner is to examine the guns every evening, at 8, P. M., and report their being secure, to the 1st lieutenant.

The 1st lieutenant will cause the gunner and boatswain, carpenter, and sail-maker, to inspect each morning, at sunrise, their different departments, and report to him their condition; should there be any important defect, he will report it to the captain.

The carpenter will be very particular in the examination of the mast, and yards, which he is to inspect every day, and if heavy weather, every four hours: all the pump gear must be kept in prime order for immediate use, and a sufficient number of shot-plugs at hand; the ship's axes kept sharp fixed to each mast ready for use, but are not to be removed without an order from the quarter-deck.

DUTIES OF THE MASTER.

The key of the spirit-room are to be kept in his possession, and the room never to be opened without his knowledge, and his presence, or that of his mate; on his leaving the ship

on duty, or otherwise, it is to be left with the 1st lieutenant. The master is to pay great attention to the stowing of the provisions, chains, cables, and every other article that can affect the ship's trim, which he will take with great accuracy before he proceeds to sea, and note the draft in the log-book ; he will frequently measure the log and lead lines, and will have the log-book sent to the cabin for the inspection of the captain ; tiers must be kept clear and clean, and every article of ground tackle ready for immeditate use ; pins and shackles free from rust, ready to slip, or shift. When at anchor, he will be particular that the hawse is kept open, and if riding by hemp cable, he will see there is no chafing or injury from want of service ; no want, at any time, of nippers, plaits, rounding, matts, and parsling well distributed. The oldest provisions must be stowed at top, and used first ; he will note all public transactions on the log-book : he must be present at the conversion and receipt of all stores, an account of them must be taken by the ship's yeoman, and the master will insert them in the log-book ; it is his duty to keep the ship's reckoning, both by Lunar Obs., chronometer, and D. R., and take single and double altitude of the sun and moon, and north star, whenever it can be had, and observe the bearings of all capes, headlands, and the nearest danger, and send it into the captain, at noon of each day, as soon after as the computation can be correctly made, (say at 1 o'clock,) and the bearings of towns, points, both at sunset and meridian. Whenever the ship approaches land, or anchors in any port, he is to sound a quarter of a mile round the ship ; the ship's draft of water forward, and aft, and height of the lower port, amidships are to be noted on her *arrival, and previous to her leaving port.* When at anchor, he will always keep the tiers clear for heaving up or veering cable ; he is frequently to examine the hawse ; if at a single anchor, the others must be clear, and ready for letting go ; and when moored, the sheet tier and anchor kept clear ; also, hawsers and towlines in readiness ; the lead lines must be frequently examined ; also, the log lines and glasses ; the short must be 14 seconds, and the long 28 ; the line must be 48 feet to the mile, and plenty of stray line.

In preparing for battle, he will cause the yards to be slung in chains; topsail sheet stoppers, and preventer braces fitted. In action, he will work the ship, under the direction of the captain, or commanding officer; he must keep an account of his expenditure of water, provisions, and fuel, and insert it daily in the log-book, with the quantity remaining on hand; he must examine the state of the provisions when received on board; report if in good order, or otherwise; he will daily inspect the stowage of the hold, and its cleanliness; he is every Saturday to inspect the store-rooms, and pump-well; he is to keep a clothes list of all the brace and topmen, and all others under his directions, as well as those at the pumps, and below; when at quarters he is to be assisted in his various *important* duties by his mates; he will forbid all spirits to be drawn off by any light, except that of daylight; not even a light in the lantern, in the spirit room; when light is wanted in the hold, they must receive the approbation of the master, and attended by a midshipman, and the ship's corporal, and kept in a *sound lantern*; he is held responsible for staying the mast, and the trim of the ship, except otherwise directed by the captain, he will make a return of the weekly expenditure to the 1st lieutenant, and sign those of all other warrant officers. All hands are not to be called at night, unless the service, or circumstances renders it absolutely necessary; the watch and idlers must perform the duty upon ordinary occasions; the men and boys must not be allowed to perform dirty work in their best clothes; all officers are requested to see that the men, in their respective divisions, are clean, as the weather will admit of, and report to the 1st lieutenant, who will make a general report to the captain at 10, A. M. The crew are to be mustered at quarters, every evening before sunset, when the officers will note those who are clean, or otherwise.

ORDER FOR THE OFFICER OF THE WATCH.

He will pay great attention to the steerage, and course that the ship makes, when on a wind; examine frequently the compasses, and compare them himself during the watch, and be particularly attentive that the sheets are close home, sail mast headed, yards nicely trimmed to the wind, and closely observe that the look-out are vigilant, hand and deep sea lead and lines at hand, and ready for use at all times; he is not to make, or to take in sail, in the day time, except in a squall, without directions from the captain, but in the night he may take in sail, acquainting the captain with his reasons, which he must enter on the log-board; he must be particular in keeping all his watch on deck, and at their stations, always keeping hands enough in the tops to take in his light sails, if they are set, and both by night and day keeping hands by royal top-gallant, and top-sail sheets and halyards, be the weather moderate or otherwise. In the night, clewlines, downhauls, should and must always be stretched along, and hands by them; also, by tacks and sheets, and every precaution taken to shorten sail, at a moment's warning; otherwise, the loss of sails and spars will be attributed to his neglect, or want of skill; he is not to tack, or veer, or alter the course, unless it is to avoid some sudden danger, without informing the captain; the pumps must be sounded every half hour, at sea, and twice a day in port, they must be pumped out whenever she has four inches more water in her than she sucks at. Whenever land, or sails are discovered, a report must be immediately made to the captain; he will note all transactions during the watch, on the log-board, and sign his name thereto. The regular wash days are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and once a month for hammocks. The officer of the first watch, before taking charge of the deck, will call on the captain, and receive his orders for the night, and the officers of the watch are enjoined to be particularly vigilant that none of the crew, or watch, come on deck without having cloth jackets on; whenever all hands are sent up to work ship, by the officer of the deck, all the midshipmen will repair to their stations, as if all hands were called to tack, or

veer ship : the officer of the deck will previously send down, to inform them of the same. Tuesday and Friday are set apart for general exercise ; should the weather not permit, then on the succeeding day ; in port, he is to acquaint himself with the situation of the hawse.number of anchors down, or ready to let go; scope of chain, or cable, and depth of water ; always keeping a hand in the channels, with the lead and line ; he is to observe the boats moored at the booms, or stern, and see that they ride securely, and in charge of a boat-keeper. All boats coming to, or going from the ship, are to be reported to him ; they are not to depart, or come alongside, without his consent ; he will keep a good look-out, and silence in the ship, during his watch, acquainting the captain with any important change in the weather, or other occurrences. No officer will appear on deck but in uniform, nor will he be allowed to leave the ship, or appear on shore except in uniform ; nor to sleep on shore in a foreign port, without permission of the captain. No boats are allowed, but in case of absolute necessity, to be absent after sunset ; all officers must be on board at that time, as the importance of preserving the health of the crew, and the great danger to be apprehended from exposure to the night air, requires a strict observance of this order : he will see that the boat's crew, on leaving the ship, have their round jackets on. Midshipmen will send into the cabin their journals and watch ; quarter and station bills, on the first of every month for inspection ; should that day fall on Sunday, then on the succeeding day. All commissioned officers are to be received from boats, on the starboard gangway, with honors due to their rank, and all other persons belonging to the ship on the larboard gangway.

ORDERS FOR THE MAGAZINE.

The keys of the magazine are always to be kept in the possession of the commanding officer of the ship ; the magazine is never to be opened without the express orders of the

captain, and when opened, the gunner is always to attend, except in action, or at quarters, a lieutenant, with the master-at-arms is to remain; the former with the gunner, the latter at the entrance of the magazine passage, until the same is closed again; no passing boxes, or anything containing powder, are ever to be kept in the store rooms, or passages, previous to the filling room, or magazine being open; all fire, and lights, are to be put out, when the lamps in the light room are to be lighted, and the basin under them filled with water; no person will be allowed to enter the magazine, or passage, with shoes, or boots, or any other clothes than a flannel jacket and trowsers, and those without metal buttons, and empty pockets, as well as nothing about their persons which can take fire. On alarm of fire, the gunner will repair to the magazine, and be ready to unlock, as soon as he shall receive orders to deliver the powder; in which case, he is without a moment's delay, to effect the same, whether in port, or at sea. The magazine is to be opened twice a month, first, and fifteenth, for the purpose of turning the powder over, a lieutenant always present; there are, at all times, to be kept in reserve, 3,000 musket cartridges for the use of the marines, and the same number for ship's use, and 1,500 pistol cartridges for ship pistols, 2,000 priming, and 2,000 wafers and tubes for cannon, together with sufficient number of flannel cartridges for each deck, say 30 for each gun. When the magazines are to be shut, the gunner is to be very careful in brushing up every particle of powder, or any other combustible matter he may discover; the gunner is to be very careful not to suffer the metal adz for the use of the magazine to be struck against the copper hoops, (if powder is in barrels,) but always to have the wooden setter applied to them, to convey the stroke from the adz; when at work in the powder room, the gunner is to be attentive never to have the light in his front, when hooping, or heading, or unhooping a barrel, least the mallet (which must have a becket through the handle, to go over the rist,) should fly out of his

hand, and break the glass of the light room; he is to put in the proper heads again, when empty, as it may be necessary to start the cartridges back again, into the barrels, or copper cases.

ORDERS FOR THE GUNNER.

As the brass sheaves, and iron pins of the blocks, for gun tackles, from being much exposed to salt water, are frequently set fast with rust, the gunner is to be particularly attentive, when this is the case, to cause the iron pins to be removed, and rasped, and well oiled or greased; he is to be very careful that the small arms, and locks for guns, are kept in good order, under the inspection of the junior lieutenant. Whenever he shall be directed to take any guns into the hold, he is to pay them over with composition, and having washed the bore with fresh water, and carefully sponged and dried the inside, he is to put a full wad, dipt in tallow and tar, about a foot in the muzzle, and see that the tompins are well driven in and puttied; he is also to drive in tight a cork into the touch-hole, and secure it there with putty. After an engagement, he is to apply to the captain, or commanding officer, for survey on the powder, shot, and other stores remaining under his charge, that the quantity expended in the engagement may be ascertained. On beating to quarters, the 1st captain of a gun, with his party, is to get the starboard guns ready, and the 2d captain, with his party, will get the larboard guns clear for action.

GENERAL ORDERS IN CASE OF FIRE.

In ordinary cases of alarm of fire, the officers of the watch, or any commission officer, is to order the drummers to beat to quarters; or, if the drummers should not be at hand, to pipe to quarters, and ring the alarm bell. The first division of boarders, as firemen, are instantly to repair to the quar-

ter-deck, with the quarter-gunners of the first division, and arrange themselves in the following order, viz. : the boarders, with the quarter gunners, on the starboard side ; the firemen on the larboard, with their buckets ; the engine men, with their officers, are to man the engine, and hold themselves in readiness to transport it to any point of the ship that may be directed. The boatswain, and his mates, to have the water buckets passed on the forecastle, ready for use, and the head pumps manned and fetched. The 1st lieutenant is to repair immediately to the place from where the alarm arose : the surgeon, and his mates, the purser, with his steward, are to examine their respective store-rooms, and report the same to the quarter-deck, as soon as possible ; the master's-mates of the hold ; master-at-arms, and ship's corporal, captain of the hole, are to repair to their tiers, and at the same time supply the cistern from the bilge-cock. The gunner, carpenter, and boatswain, yeomen, to repair immediately to the doors of their respective store-rooms, but not to open them on any account, without an order from the quarter-deck. The carpenter, with four of his crew, are to assemble in the larboard gangway, with axes and mauls, and there await orders ; the pumps are to be rigged, and manned, and fetched, by the carpenter's mates, and remaining crew ; the marines with their officers, are instantly to appear with their arms, drawn up in four columns, abaft the wheel, and there await in readiness to execute such orders as may be found necessary. The officers of every grade, are particularly requested to preserve silence among the people, and prevent confusion. In time of action, the men particularly selected and quartered as firemen, are always to be ready to seize their buckets, when ordered, to extinguish fire in any part of the ship. The men stationed on the berth-deck, as per quarter bill, are to assist the firemen, by passing water from the tank, in the main hole ; it will, therefore, be the particular duty of the master-at-arms, to see the orders carried into effect : consequently, to see that the tanks in the main hole are immediately in readiness, to supply the water ; also, the suction hose passed overboard, and worked by the engine men ; and when the ship is on fire, she must be hove to, in order that the suction hose may supply the engine with water.

ORDERS FOR SURGEON.

The surgeon, or, 1st assistant, is always to be on board ; he will cause a written report of the sick to be made to the captain every morning at 10, A. M., at which time he will point out any improvement which may conduce to the health of

the crew ; he is to have charge of the sick, and the hospital is to be under his immediate superintendance, and he is to direct the hammocks to be carried on deck, belonging to the men whose health will permit it ; when the number of sick is so great as to require additional attendance, proper persons must be appointed, on his application to the 1st lieutenant. The surgeon, or his assistant, must daily inspect the boilers, and cooking utensils, in order that they may be kept perfectly clean ; their condition will be reported to the 1st lieutenant. The sick men's clothing, and bedding, are to be washed by their mess-mates ; their persons kept clean, and their bedding frequently aired. The surgeon will inform the captain when he thinks the ship ought to be fumigated : his suggestions must at all times receive prompt and respectful attention, when the subject relates to the health of the ship and crew.

The midshipmen, a class of officers to whom no particular duty can be assigned, are placed under the fostering care of the captain, who will give them every opportunity to become seamen and officers : they are to be exercised one hour, each Saturday, at the great guns, one hour at the exercise of musket and sword, by the sergeant of marines ; it is a duty which the 1st lieutenant owes to the service, to see that these young gentlemen employ all their spare hours in acquiring a thorough knowledge of all the duties to be performed by an officer and seaman on board a vessel of war : they are to be divided into three watches ; they are never to leave deck, until regularly relieved, either at meal hours, or the expiration of the watch ; they are to keep regular journals, and to send them in to the captain on the first of every month, and the result of their day's work, at 1, P. M. ; they must keep perfect watch, quarter, and station bills. The crew are to be divided into two watches, at sea, and subdivided into four, for harbor duty. The mess-mates of those absent are to take charge of their hammocks. No person is allowed to bring liquor on board, without permission from the captain. The officer in charge of the berth-deck will daily inspect the mess chests and bread bags, keeping them clean, and free from grease. The berth-deck is not to be washed but once a week, and then in very mild weather, and if oftener, by permission of the captain. In warm weather, the berth-deck will be whitewashed every fifteen days. Sundays and Wednesdays are inspection days, when the crew are to be clean, shaved, and dressed. The lieutenants and master will keep correct lists of the men's clothing, mattresses, and blankets of their divisions, of which a general muster must take place every month ; no man will be allowed to draw clothing, or bedding, except on the requisition of his commanding division officer, who is to prevent his

men from selling, or otherwise disposing of their clothes, bedding, or small stores, at the hazard of severe punishment.

ORDERS FOR THE PURSER.

All provision and slops are to be furnished on requisition of the purser approved by the captain. The purser is responsible to the navy department for the due expenditure of provision, slops, and stores. It is his duty, particularly on a foreign station, to inspect, as far as practicable, all provisions previous to their being sent on board; this duty is more necessary, since it must be understood that no survey will be ordered, unless it appears that the articles complained of were in good order when first received on board. If any provision sent on board be rejected by the master, they will be examined by two commission and one warrant officer, ordered by the captain to hold the survey, whose report shall be final. The provisions are to be served out to the ship's company agreeably to the ration prescribed by law; no alterations are to be made therein without the orders of the captain. The commission and warrant officers may stop their rations, but cannot draw a part of their ration. All persons who may wish credit for their stopped rations, will give the purser due notice of their intentions, or they will not be credited on a settlement of their accounts. Should any article of provision be likely to perish, the purser will immediately report to the captain. Whenever fresh provisions are ordered for the ship's company, the purser will take great care to supply a sufficient quantity of vegetables. Provisions are to be served out by the ship's steward, in the presence of a master's-mate or midshipman, between the hours of 7 and 9, A. M., and 2 and 4, P. M. Whenever the captain orders the allowance of any article reduced, the purser will show the written order to the master, that it may be noted on the log-book. No slops are to be issued without an order from the captain, and the slops are to be served publicly on the last day of every month, in the presence of a commissioned officer, who will see that the articles to be issued are agreeable to the requisitions approved by the captain, and will witness the receipt given by the men. When the purser is of opinion that any article of his department will be benefitted by being aired, he will report immediately to the 1st lieutenant, in order that they may be got on deck as soon as possible. The purser will examine frequently into the condition of the stores in his charge, and when it may appear that they are damaged, or spoiling, he will report without

delay to the captain, that a survey may be ordered, if necessary. When any articles in his department are condemned, as unfit for use, the purser will show the survey to the master, that it may be entered in the log-book. At sea, the purser will deliver to the captain, weekly returns of the expenditures of provisions and candles. The purser is to secure the clothes and bedding, and other articles of such persons as die, and sell them at auction, for the benefit of their heirs, also of those who may desert. A commissioned officer will witness the receipt given by the men for all sorts of stores; it is therefore to be understood, that all disputes between the purser and the crew respecting accounts, are to be determined by the purser's receipt book, on requisitions approved by the captain, and witnessed as directed.

The wind sails are to be set, whenever the weather will permit.

All promotions will be made from the most meritorious portion of the crew whose names are inserted on the book of merit, such as are noted for their seaman-like conduct and sobriety. The yeoman is to take an account of all public stores received on board or landed; he is to furnish the master with a copy, in order that they may be entered in the log-book; he is weekly to enter the ship's expenditure, and file the weekly returns of the different officers; he is held responsible for the books and stationery. The master-at-arms, and ship's corporal, are to be upon the gangway, and examine all boats, and boat's crews coming alongside, and guard against their introducing liquor on board, without permission from the captain; to extinguish lights, confine prisoners, and make the captain a morning report; he is also to keep a register, in which he will note the offence of all persons, and their punishment, by whom punished, and the effect of this punishment on their future conduct; he must keep a weekly return of the cooks, and to keep the berth-deck in perfect *order*, clean, and in silence. All officers are requested to exact upon all occasions, from their inferiors, the most ready, unequivocal, and respectful compliance with their orders.

THE



GREAT CONTROVERSY

ABOUT
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HELL AND THE FUTURE SALVATION,

Arranged in a Series of Questions,

BY J. A. SEITZ.

"I give you good doctrine."

Proverbs iv. 2.

NORWAY, ME.

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"God has revealed it to be his will to punish some of mankind forever. You know not but you are one of them. Whether you shall be saved or damned depends entirely on his will. And supposing he sees it most for his glory and the general good that you should be damned, it is certainly his will that you should be damned. On this supposition, then, you ought to be willing to be damned, for not to be willing to be damned in this case is opposing God's will.—DR. SAMUEL HOPKINS : Works, vol. iii, p. 145.

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THE GREAT CONTROVERSY.

*To those who know, or at least ought to know,
what they teach and believe.*

Is there such a place as Hell? If so, where is it, and what kind of a place is it? You often speak about it, what do you really *know* about it? Is it a place, that any one you know of has seen, or about which you have any reliable revelation?

You say that you believe in a hell, is believing knowing? Men have often believed what has not been true, are you perfectly sure in this belief? To talk about such a place, to preach about it, to make it a religious doctrine, to impose terrible restraints on account of it, to put men and women and children in fear of it, ought you not to *know* there is such a place, and not merely believe or imagine there is such a place?

Is it in any place that you know of, visible, or invisible? Is there anything in the visible universe that suggests such a place, that suggests such a place as probable in the invisible universe, that affords the conditions which would make it possible? Once the belief was quite general that

somewhere beneath the surface of the earth there was a vast cavern, the abode of disembodied spirits. This subterranean cavern or abode was named by different people Amenti, Sheol, and Hades, and was sometimes described as a place of torment. This was a belief through the long ages when the earth was thought to be an extended plain and the heavens a fixed firmament above it. We now know that this was but a belief, that it was at first something even less substantial than a belief, that it was only a conjecture or poetic fancy,—is the hell of our modern belief, and of our modern dogmatic theology, anything but the survival of this primitive belief or fancy, suited still to the superstitions of the ignorant, and of advantage to the selfish interests of priests and hierarchies?

Is hell, as you describe it, any more real than the Pandimonium of the poets, the Inferno of Dante for instance, or the hell described by Milton in his *Paradise Lost*? Is hell, as you believe in it, any more real than the fancied ghosts, demons, and gods, once the objects of devout belief, but now relegated by all intelligent persons to the superstitious limbo of the past?

Do you really believe in such a hell yourself as you describe for the consideration of others? Is it a belief with you as real, as solemn, as earnest, as you pretend? You name it as a place, do you name it with the confidence that you would name

New York, or Boston, or Washington, places that you have visited or know to exist? Do you name it in the belief that you name heaven?

II.

To the very wise Doctors of Theology, who, it is reasonable to suppose, know all about it, else they would not say so much about it.

Is hell the name of a place, or is it as some hold a state or condition? If a place, what kind of a place? Is it marked in your Spiritual geographies as a lake burning with fire, and brimstone? If so marked, and so known, will this lake burn forever—the smoke of it ascend forever? The planets are supposed to have had a fiery origin but they cool in time and become happy abodes for living creatures, is there a planet where the necessary laws of creation are suspended that such a lake of fire and brimstone may burn forever—may smoke forever?

If such a place exists did God create it? Did he create it in the beginning for the purpose of tormenting sinners in it forever? The best thought we have of God is that he is a God of love, would a God of love create such a place as hell? Would he create any such place for any such purpose?

Or if hell is a state or condition, what kind of a state or condition? Has David rightly describ-

ed it? Has Jonah told the truth about it? Did Job know anything about it? Do men feel the pains of it in the present life, or is it a condition of the future life only? If a condition of both will it cause greater anguish in the future life than any have known in the present life? If a condition of the future life only, and a condition of suffering such as none here have known or described, how have you come to know any thing about it, or how are you able to determine any thing about it? Is it necessarily an endless condition? Is it as the existence of God changeless and endless? Does hell as a condition banish the sinner forever from God? Can you conceive of a place where God is not?

But supposing the sinner may be thus banished from God, since you represent him as hating God, may it not be delight rather than punishment for him to be thus banished from the sight of God—from the object of his hatred? You represent the sinner as having pleasure with his sins, again you represent him in the future as living right on in his sins, will not hell then be a kind of sinners' paradise? If I may presume so far, may not the employments of the sinner in hell, as you have represented them, appeal more readily to the intellect, or the satisfaction of ordinary mortals, than the stated worship of heaven, taking this also as you have represented it? If I may presume but this question further, may not

the company of sinners in hell, made up of such rare spirits as Voltaire, Hume, Bolingbroke, Hobbes, Spinoza, Franklin and Jefferson, Leigh Hunt and Charles Dickens, with certain choice old heathen of Greece and Rome, be much preferred above the goodly company of Theodosius, St. Dominic, Torquemada, Calvin, Knox, and other such like exemplary persons reckoned among the saints in heaven?

Supposing hell to be a place, what proportion of the human race will go there? Or a condition, how many will get into that condition? Or banishment from God, how many will be banished thence? Some of you hold that the greater part of mankind will be lost—forever lost, others among you claim that there will be but a small number, about the number in our penal institutions, how is this difference to be reconciled, or is it comparatively unimportant?

If such a place as hell exists it must have its use, what is that use? The world exists to serve some good purpose we believe, what possible good purpose can such a place as hell serve in the economy of the universe? A very common view is that it is to meet the demands of justice—of the Divine justice sorely tried, or terribly angered by man's disobedience and sin, would you accept that as a good reason why hell should exist? Dr. Samuel Hopkins gave as his opinion that men, and even angels ought to be willing to

be damned for the glory of God, would you accept that as a good reason why hell should exist? Jonathan Edwards said, "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever." Would you accept the view that hell has such use—that the saints have their highest joy and satisfaction in knowing that hell is packed full of sinners, and burning with sulphurous flame for their endless torment?

The Catholic Father Rochford has recently told us that the thought of hell has peopled heaven, would you subscribe to this statement? Is hell thus providentially provided as a means of grace? That the thought of it should people heaven, and that its agonies should exalt the happiness of the saints forever, leads us to infer that as a means of grace it is in itself sufficient. In comparison with this, are the love of God, the strivings of the spirit, the blood of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel worth the naming? But in what way is this brought about? Is it in the belief of hell as an article of faith, or is it in the fear of it?

If a *belief*, in what way does belief in a hell of endless torment help you? Are you more of a christian for holding to such a belief? Are you any nearer heaven and glory because you believe in a hell? Do you sing more sweetly, do you pray oftener and with greater earnestness, do you love God better and worship him more sincerely

and devoutly, do you follow more closely the example of our blessed Saviour,—are you wiser, better, happier, because you believe in a hell?

If a *fear*, does the fear of hell help you in any good work you are doing? Does it strengthen your faith in God, in his love and mercy, and in all things wise, and just, and good? Does the fear of hell restrain you from sinning,—from lying, stealing, murdering,—from drunkenness and sensuality? Can you not do right for the sake of the right alone? The heathen were able to do this, they learned to be truthful, virtuous, pious, brave, humane, charitable, self-denying,—ought not a christian do as well?

Indeed, could you not live a moral, a religious, a true christian life, without either the belief in a hell or the fear of it? Might you not attain the highest joy in heaven, and hold your place in glory forever secure, without either the belief, or the fear of hell?

You seem to be in fear of the immoral tendency of such doctrines as Universalists teach, would not truth and goodness and virtue be as secure though all the world should be saved? Would not heaven be as delightful an abode though all that ever lived should make it their home?

Let me ask in all sincerity, if either the belief in hell, or the fear of it, do in any degree promote piety or restrain crime? Has not the teaching

of this dogma made infidels oftener than Christians? You urge that the Bible teaches the doctrine that sinners will be burned in hell forever. Intelligent people answer, "Then the Bible is not the word of God." You urge that it is the doctrine of the church, they answer, "You may build up your creed for a vindictive God and a place of hopeless eternal torment as strong as you will, and hedge it about as strongly with anathemas as you will, it is nothing to us, we shall neither accept your creed nor go into your churches." You urge it at the grave, but the Christian mother, as she looks down into that grave on the coffined remains of her impenitent child, will seek other comforts than your book, or your creed, or your church. Her agonized love will not soon be persuaded that the doom you pronounce is the message from the Infinite love on high.

It is equally powerless as a means of restraint. In a wide acquaintance, and special inquiry among the most profane and lawless people, I have found the belief in a devil and hell very nearly universal, a statement which you can easily verify if you will make the same inquiry. Now why do these persons persist in their wickedness, believing as they do in such dreadful doom should they die impenitent? In making the most careful canvass of the belief of those in our State prisons we find that almost the entire

number believe in a hell, many of the prisoners having been Roman Catholics, and communists of other churches holding such belief, while very seldom has one holding the doctrine of Universal Salvation found his way to a penal institution convicted of crime. How is this to be accounted for? In Italy, Spain, and Turkey, almost the entire people believe in a hell of endless torment,—is there any one to say that there is in these countries that restraint upon wickedness that there ought to be? In the Catholic countries, especially, there is an idle and licentious priesthood, and in neither of these countries are men restrained by their faith from robbery, and murder, and a revengeful spirit. No one would think of comparing the morals of the people in these countries, hedged about as they are with this dogma, with the people of the New England States where Universalism is a very common belief,—where it is known to all classes and modifies more or less the teachings of all other religious denominations. If hell is such a restraint, as you hold it to be, why is not the moral condition of these countries the reverse of what it now is?

There is a remarkable passage in Dr. Wayland's "Life of Judson," illustrative of this very subject. It relates to the religion and morals of the Burmans, and shows with singular precision and plainness the utter uselessness of the terror-

system in restraining men from evil, or in promoting their virtue. "They believe" he says "that for the least aberration from rectitude the torment is only less than infinite." After one sin, the being is forever helplessly under condemnation, unless he can attain unto annihilation. It is a pure system of rewards and punishments, without pardon and without hope for the guilty. "Thus," he adds, "the system seems to have exhausted the human faculties in conceiving of terrors which should deter us from sin." *And what is the result?* The Burmans ought to give evidence of high virtue in character and conduct, if this restraining power set forth in their theology shall have had its legitimate work with them. But what are the facts? Dr. Judson frankly confesses that "this system of religion has no power over the heart, or restraint on the passions," and Dr. Wayland frankly owns that it is found practically to have *created no barrier whatever against sin.*" He adds, "While the law of Gaudama, the Deity, forbids to take the life of any animated being, the Burmans are blood-thirsty and vindictive beyond most of the nations of India. Murders are of very common occurrence, and the punishment of death is inflicted with every aggravation of cruelty. While licentiousness is absolutely forbidden, they are said to be universally profligate. While the law denounces covetousness, they are almost to a man,

dishonest, rapacious, prone to robbery, and to robbery ending in blood. The law forbids treachery and deceit on all occasions; and yet from the highest to the lowest, they are a nation of liars. When detected in the grossest falsehood, they indicate no consciousness of shame, and even pride themselves on successful deceit." A worse hell or a worse people than are here depicted can not easily be imagined or described in human language. They are both failures! The hell is worse than useless, and they who believe in it need education in that religion which opens the heaven of obedience to men and to angels. In the words of Dr. J. G. Adams, from whom I take this illustration, I would ask "if it is not time for enlightened Christians in every sect to acknowledge that the most effective and enduring life piety and Christian manliness our world has known have been such as have grown out of the love of righteousness for its own sake, and that this is, after all, the soundest and safest of all doctrines to urge upon mankind?"

So far, indeed, is the doctrine of hell from having any utility in the service of morals and religion, that it is not presuming anything to name it, as Satan was once named, the enemy of righteousness. Hell makes hypocrites and cowards, not honest and brave men such as are worthy the name Christian. A soldier in our late war, dying on the field of battle, was told by a chap-

laid to trust in the atoning blood of Christ, and ask God for pardon, urging that this would yet save him from hell. "No, not now," said the soldier, "I did not do it when I was strong and well; I will not do it now merely to please God and to prevent him from sending me to hell. That would be the act of a coward." Which was the nobler, this man honest at death's door, or the thousands who profess to own God and Christ without any other thought or care but that of escaping hell?

As a moral sanction, or as a means of moral restraint the doctrine of Endless Punishment has been greatly over-estimated. It has served the revivalist whose creed appeals to the lower passions of men, the dogmatist who would control the opinions of men, but not the evangelist and teacher who would reform and enlighten men. It has served the darkest era of ignorance and superstition, the worst of despotisms, political and spiritual; it has never assisted reason, or liberty, or justice, nor has it anywhere allied itself with human progress, and thus, instead of promoting piety and morality, actually antagonizes the means by which these are alone perfected and sustained.

Whatever your own belief, you cannot help observing that of late the discussion turns not so much upon the truth of the doctrine of Endless Punishment as upon its expediency. As Mr.

Pullman has put it, "The question to-day is not, "Is it true?" but, "Is it safe and expedient to drop it?" In view of the results of this doctrine, as they are afforded to us by experience, whether in Heathen, Mohammadan, or Catholic countries, or in the evils peculiar to our American republic, such as the bribery and theft in our civil service, the embezzlements and breaches of trust among the officers of our savings banks, insurance companies, railway and manufacturing corporations,—in view of the army of scamps in broadcloth—the elect of Young Mens' Christian Associations, and of the popular Evangelical churches, who have gone forth from nave and aisle to play with the nation's honor and values,—the widow's dower, the orphan's heritage, the laborer's wages, and the scanty savings and dependence of the poor and the aged,—in view, I say of all this, would it not be more apposite to put the question in this way? *Is it any longer expedient to preach this doctrine? Is it any longer safe to preach it?* In view of all this it is certainly no longer safe to advertise that convenient antidote, that the profession of religion will immediately cancel all the evil deeds of an evil life.

As to the economy that hell will serve in the future, we have no better account than that recently given by Henry Ward Beecher, who says:

"The continuance of suffering after it is hopeless in respect to the individual and needless in respect to society is simply cruelty, and I can not conceive of any man of a deeply moral and reflective nature who would bring himself to believe that God will bring into life, as he has, myriads which utterly outrun all computation, under circumstances in which they not only have no help whatsoever to effect moral growth, but where all their surroundings are adverse and perverse, and allow them to continue under such known conditions to reproduce generations innumerable, and then to place them in a great hereafter where the principal feature is suffering and where suffering has ceased to have any moral benefit, and so continue them there forever and forever. This is to create a department of the universe for the purposes simply of suffering ; but needless suffering is cruelty, and any being who inflicts needless suffering is tyrannical.

This was also the view of Olympiadorus, who says, in his commentary on Plato :

"If therefore, punishment does not in any respect benefit us, nor bring us a better condition it is inflicted in vain. Neither God, however, nor nature does anything in vain."

I would not be understood as denying the utility of all punishment. Universalists believe that every sin will have its punishment. "The doctrine of retribution constitutes one of the grandest features of our interpretation of Christianity—retribution for sin and crime, a punishment certain, inevitable, from which no repentance, early or late, will save us." We teach something further than the mere denial of Endless Punishment, something more than the pos-

itive faith that all men will be saved. Ours is not the doctrine that the bad deeds which men commit are canceled or borne for us vicariously by another and an innocent person. Whether in this world, or in the world to come, we believe the penalty will not fail for the sin committed. But this penalty, we believe, will be commensurate only for the sin committed. We believe in a "just and equitable, and at the same time a parental, administration of the divine government; in which God renders to every man according to his works." We believe that the effects of God's judgments and chastisements will be salutary—that they will at last subdue the iniquities of the stubborn and rebellious, and bring sinners penitent to his throne,—that his righteous judgments of whatever kind—his chastisements of whatever kind, will be inflicted for our good and not purposeless and in wrath—that he the All-Merciful One, though hating sin to the consuming of it with fire, loves the sinner and wills his salvation. No one will be suffered to sin forever, no one will be tormented forever. God demands not the sacrifice of suffering but that of obedience to his requirements. When he punishes, it is to this end. "Affliction and punishment are often used as means to bring sinners to repentance. God in his infinite wisdom has so connected crime and punishment, as to cause the latter to correct the former. He punishes, not simply to make his

creatures miserable, but to bring them to a sense of their duty, and effect their reformation. He deals out his punishment upon the ungodly, as medicine by a skillful physician to effect a cure. In all his dealings with them he has their reformation in view. He virtually says to every one what he says to the disobedient Jews, ‘If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes ; nevertheless my loving kindness I will not take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.’” So in time, so, if need be, in eternity.

IV.

To the very learned Doctors.

Is the doctrine of eternal damnation, the burning of sinners and unbelievers forever in a lake of fire and brimstone, plainly and necessarily derived from the Bible?—from the original Hebrew and Greek versions of the Bible? Would an intelligent translation or interpretation of the Bible, uninfluenced by dogmatic theology, by sectarian bias, or pious trickery, sustain such a doctrine? Would it not be in itself the most complete refutation of such a doctrine?

While it would be too much to affirm, as some have held, that our common English version of the Bible was translated altogether in the interest of dogmatic theology, you cannot help notice-

ing the somewhat curious coincidence that certain Hebrew and Greek words have been differently translated, and thus made to illustrate and sustain creeds and doctrines in which the writers of the Bible had neither part nor sympathy. Take for example, the Greek words, "*krima*" and "*krisis*," which are translated in our Bible sometimes "judgment," sometimes "condemnation," and sometimes "damnation." Thus Paul is made to say that he who eats the Lord's Supper unworthily "eats and drinks *damnation* to himself." But it does not make Jesus say, "For damnation I have come into the world," but, "For judgment I have come into the world," and yet the word is the same. Our translation does not read, "This is the damnation, that light has come into the world," "but this is the condemnation." Would you so translate now?

The Hebrew word Sheol occurs sixty-four times in the Bible, and is translated thirty-two times hell, twenty-nine times grave, and three times pit, would you so translate now? In our Bibles we have the word hell in place of the original *Ge-hinnom* or *Gehenna*, have we the right word? The words *olam* and *aion*—*aionios* were translated *forever*, *everlasting* and *eternal*. It would seem that they represent indefinite time, the life of man, of generations, and of nations, the short time that Jonah is reported to have been in the whale's belly—and, perhaps a portion of

eternity. Should not our translators have marked these durations in some other way? Should they have placed these words in support of such a dogma as Future Endless Punishment?

Canon Farrar has recently asked, "Where would be the popular teachings about hell if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bibles the three words 'damnation,' 'hell,' and 'eternity?'" The question will bear repeating—where would these teachings be? Will Mr. Joseph Cook adjust his wonderful microscope and tell us?

But ought these words appear in our English Bible? When we consider what an ancient book the Bible is, how it is the work of men long in their graves, who have left us no other record and no commentary upon their sayings, who have not given us the key to their thoughts or their genius, and how the Bible itself is in many of its parts obscure, abounding in tropes, and parables, and idioms, of which none now may know the equivalent, is there that to warrant us in using such words—words of such terrible import in the translation of this book? Indeed, where are the men of liberal culture who now hold that these words are translated as they ought to be in our common version of the Bible? Dr. Farrar expresses himself thus strongly concerning them:

"I say unhesitatingly—I say, claiming the fullest

right to speak with the authority of knowledge—I say, with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility—I say, standing here in the sight of God and of my Saviour, and, it may be, of the angels and the spirits of the dead—that not one of those words ought to stand any longer in our English Bibles; and that being, in our present acceptation of them, simply mis-translations, they most unquestionably will not stand in the revised version of the Bible if the revisers have understood their duty."

Our translators had special interest in certain dogmas, such as Total Depravity, Election, the Vicarious Sacrifice, and Endless Punishment—together a vast scheme of redemption and retribution, was their disinterestedness such, when translating the Bible, that these were kept entirely out of view—that the real meaning of the sacred writers was given or uniformly sustained? Dr. Hodge of Princeton tells us that the Bible is no more a system of theology, than nature is a system of chemistry or of mechanics, but whereas we find in nature the facts which the chemist has to examine in order to ascertain the laws by which they are determined, so the Bible contains truths which the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other. This has been the work of the theologian for centuries and with what result? Says Mr. Loring Moody:

"The older types of Christian theology, and the modern 'evangelical,' with their vast hierarchies, systems, salvations, are based upon the hypothesis, that when God created the universe, and came to that very

small part of his work, the conception and formation of man, his genius utterly failed ; the spiritual mechanism went contrary to his will and expectation ; and instead of going patiently at work to remedy its defects, as a human inventor does, and making it perfect in all its parts, powers, and motives, got angry, and cursed his own invention, and sentenced it to eternal damnation, or, according to the 'Westminster divines,' doomed him to the pains of hell forevermore."

But is this found in the Bible? Does this express the relation of the Divine Father to his children, as shown in the Bible?

But whatever the motives, limits, or sectarian bias of the translators they could not conceal the one great doctrine of the Bible, that the way of salvation is not through creeds, beliefs, or sacrifice, but through righteousness,—that we have need to be saved, not from hell, but from our sins. Nor could they conceal the revelation that God is love, that his mercy endureth forever, that he is no respecter of persons, that he will reward every man according to his works,—that he, the judge of all the earth will do right. However much inclined they may have been to favor their own doctrines they gave us such passages of Scripture as the following :

Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou didst take vengeance on their inventions.—*Psalm xcix., 8.* Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall

swear.—*Isaiah*, xlvi., 22, 23. The Lord will not cast off forever; though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according unto the multitude of his mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.—*Lam.*, iii., 31-33 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, and have not obeyed his voice.—*Dan.*, ix., 9, 10. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities.—*Micah*, vii., 18, 19. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.—*John*, vi., 39. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—*John*, xii., 32. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.—*Col.*, i., 19, 20. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.—*Rom.*, xi., 26, 27,-32. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.—*Rev.*, v., 13.

They make the Scriptures say that God is kind even to the evil and the unthankful and that he has no delight in the destroying of his people. Nor were they able to conceal that the Bible doc-

trine of retribution is very different from that of our modern evangelical creeds.

We learn from the Pentateuch, as now translated, that the Jews in their early history attached no idea of retribution to the future state. Dr. Edward Beecher following Warburton, Jahn, Milman, Campbell, Ewald, and Stanley observes: "In the law of Moses, taken as a rule of life, individual and national, there is not one motive derived from a future state and its retributions. All is derived from this world and the present life." In the traditional period, in the account of the first sin, the sentence pronounced upon Adam's transgression is labor, pain, sorrow, and natural death. Of the same character is the retribution shown in the account of the Deluge, the Great Dispersion, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues that came upon the Egyptians. The same temporal retributions are shown in the development of "the Mosaic economy in the wilderness," and of the establishment of the nation in Canaan. For loyalty to the nation and the nation's God, and for the practice of such virtues as were then commended, the award was the special favor of God among the nations, military success, health, long life, and material prosperity. For disobedience, or treason, or idolatry, or wickedness, withdrawal of the divine favor, defeat in war, captivity, famine, disease, poverty, shame, and contempt,—destruction from the earth. Nothing can be plainer than this as shown in *Lev.*, xxvi. and in *Deut.*, xxxiii.

This was the view of the Jewish people for more than a thousand years,—their view of God's moral government from the beginning of the world. Now,

if the Jews did, for so long a time, believe in such temporal retribution, as is plainly set forth in the Pentateuch, and if this really was, as you teach, a revelation from heaven, how are we to account for the silence of God during this period in not making known the existence of hell and the danger of it to his people Israel? Why did he not announce it as a terror to evil doers? Why did he pass over so many and such grievous transgressions as are mentioned in this book without threatening the sinner with the pains of hell-fire? If there is such a place as hell how can you account for the silence of God about it during thousands of years? How can you account for this silence, believing as you do, that this was a time when God favored the world with frequent and special revelations? Were there such a place as a fiery fixed perdition for the endless torment of sinners, is it not singular that God did not so announce in the beginning? Is it not singular that the Pentateuch and the Vedic Hymns, the oldest literary productions of the race should be silent about it? Is it not somewhat singular too, that the doctrine of Endless Punishment should appear among different nations and people, such as the Hindus, Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and Christians under conditions so nearly alike,—during times of sectarian controversy and intolerance, and of metaphysical assumption,—when there was a priesthood, active, cunning, and grasping for temporal power,—when a few men, counted wise, held to a philosophy selfish and distrustful of human nature,—when the masses of the people were ignorant and superstitious and most readily controlled by fear; that, in short, to account for this doctrine wherever

and whenever taught, we have but to mark the rise, growth, and dominance of Dogmatic Theology?

Rabbi Isaac Schwab is doubtless correct in his statement that the terms from which the Christian dogmatists derive their notion of perdition, arose during the fierce controversies between Sadducees and Pharisees a few centuries before the Christian era. The mighty reaction that had taken place in the Jewish mind through the influence of the Greek philosophy led their thinkers to ponder on the higher problems of life and to solve them by philosophical reasoning. One of these was the apparent injustice of God in dealing with the righteous and the wicked on this earth, and the Pharisees stepped in with the theory that divine rewards and punishments were not confined to the earthly existence but extended into the life to come. In course of time as the controversy continued the Pharisees materialized their doctrines by giving names and assigning places to rewards and punishments after death. They named the place of punishment Ge-hinnom, (Greek Gehenna) after the loathsome valley of the son of Hinnom, once the scene of human sacrifice, and ever afterwards a kind of devil's acre, for the consuming of the filth and garbage of the Jewish city, and for the exposure of criminals. There was great diversity of opinion, however, as to the duration of punishment in Gehenna, whether it would last only till the Day of Judgment or after it, whether it would be of limited or of eternal duration.

How early the Christians came to accept such views of future retribution, as the Pharisees held, we cannot now determine. St. Paul does not

mention them, and the earliest and most sacred Christian profession of faith, the Apostles' Creed is silent about them. When we consider that this creed was the growth of nearly five centuries of Christian teaching, and that there is no hint in it at all of any of those condemnatory clauses so prominent in all our later creeds, we may safely infer, that whatever the belief of individuals, the Church in the time of the Apostles and Fathers was not largely influenced by the doctrines of the Pharisees. We do know that many of the most devout teachers and believers among the Fathers were Universalists. Dr. Schaff, though himself a Partialist, has had the fairness to inform us that the condemnatory clauses of our later creeds came not out of the first Christian faith and teaching but out of bitter sectarian controversies, not unlike those of the Sadducees and Pharisees. The traditions of the elders, the faith once delivered to the saints, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, were of little influence in the hot polemical strife which gave us our modern church covenants and professions of faith. Indeed the men of the time were too narrow, bigoted, ignorant, cold, and bloodless to imbibe anything of the spirit which gave us the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apostles' Creed. It was their business to curse Meroz,—to give us an era of special damnation. As the Rev. J. Hyatt Smith has put it: “Creeds damn each

other. Protestants damn Catholics, and Catholics damn Protestants, while both unite to damn the heathen. Between universal damnation and local damnation, pretty nearly everybody is damned by creeds."

A story is going the round of the East Indian papers of a frontier officer, just after the conquest of the Punjab, being in conversation with a Sikh chief, when the latter remarked, "You English do not know how to manage a Pathan. I will tell you what you should do. You should get a sack and put your Pathan into it, and then fill it with chaff and set fire to it. That is the way to manage a Pathan." Shortly after the same officer fell in with some Pathans, and in the course of conversation one of them observed, "You English do not know how to manage a Sikh. I will tell you what you should do. You should get a sack, and put your Sikh into it, then fill it with chaff and set fire to it. That is the way to manage a Sikh." Well in this way the makers of creeds have each told us how God should deal with the other.

Yet from these very men, the makers of these creeds, the men, who though claiming to be Christians thought so meanly of each other, the men, who placed themselves indisputably upon record as declaring that all infants born of heathen or unregenerate parents, dying in infancy, were doomed to endless torment in a hell of fire, the men who formulated the dogmas of Total Depravity, and of Reprobation, who thought it right to burn, and mutilate, and torture heretics

and witches,—from these very men, I repeat with Mr. Murray, “from their hands, and from their hands alone” we have our present translations and interpretations of the Bible. To these men the Church and the ministry is to-day under bondage. From these the Church has its creeds and not from the Bible.

“A corruption of the text of the Vedas has cast thousands of Hindu widows alive on the funeral pile. An interpolation of two words in the service of the Eastern Church has driven whole villages in Russia into a fiery death.” Certain words wrested from the Bible are made to doom whole nations and generations to perdition.

V.

To Dwight L. Moody.

“I say to thee, false Priest,
A ministering angel shall my dear one be,
When thou liest howling,”

In your sermon on hell preached at the Hippodrome, New York, you said :

“There will be no tender, loving Jesus coming and offering you salvation either. He will be far from you there. There will be no loving wife to weep over you there, young man. You may have a praying wife here to-day, but remember in that lost world you will have no praying wife. Did you ever think how dark this world would become if all the praying wives and mothers and ministers were out of it? Think of that lost world where there are no praying wives or mothers! Remember the time is coming when you will have no loved mother to pray for your soul and for you. Undoubtedly many in that lost world would

give millions, if they had them, if they had their mothers now to pray them out of that place; but it is too late. They have been neglecting salvation until the time has come when God says, "Cut them down; they incumber the ground; the day of mercy is closed." You laugh at the Bible; but how many there are in that lost world to-day that would give countless treasures if they had the blessed Bible there! You may make sport of ministers, but bear in mind there will be no ministers of the Gospel there. There will be none there for you to laugh at. Here they are, remember, God's messengers to you. His best gifts to you—these loving friends that look after your soul. You may have some friends praying for your salvation to-day. Remember, you will not have one in that lost world. There will be no one to come and put his hand on your shoulder and weep over you there and pray for you to come to Christ. Sunday mornings you hear the chiming of the bells telling you it is God's day. You very often see the people going up to the house of God, but bear in mind that in that lost world no bell will summon you to God's holy tabernacle, no bell will warn you of the Sabbath day. There will be no Sabbath there for you to make light of and sport of. It will be too late. Some of you have got Sabbath school teachers that are burdened with your salvation at this present time. They are pleading day and night that you may be won to Christ. Bear in mind that in that lost world no kind teachers will plead for you or with you. There will be no special meetings there."

This is very like a parody of Michael Wigglesworth's Day of Doom published in 1662.

"One natural Brother beholds another,
in his astonished fit,
Yet sorrows not thereat a jot,
nor pities him a whit.
The goodly Wife conceives no grief,
nor can she shed a tear

For the sad state of her dear Mate,
when she his doom doth hear.

He that was erst a Husband pierc'd
with sense of Wife's distress,
Whose tender heart did bear a part
of all her grievances,
Shall mourn no more as heretofore,
because of her ill plight,
Although he see her now to be
a damn'd forsaken wight.

The tender Mother will own no other
of all her num'rous brood,
But such as stand at Christ's right hand,
acquitted through his Blood.
The pious Father had now much rather
his graceless son should lie
In Hell with Devils, for all his evils,
burning eternally,
Than God most High should injury
by sparing him sustain."

It is also very like Rev. Thomas Barton, who says :

"The godly husband will say AMEN to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom ; and the godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly parents say HALLELUJAH at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child ; and the godly child shall from his heart APPROVE the damnation of his wicked parents ! —the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him!"

If you really believe this, upon whom does it reflect most, the sinners in misery, or the saints in glory? You tell of the lost, but who so far lost as the soul that forgets father and mother,

sister and brother, husband, wife or, child? You claim to be a great reader of the Bible and you interpret it most literally, have you not read in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, how the Rich man, though in hell, was concerned about his five brethren? However selfish or sensual his life he still had some sense of humanity left in him. Are we to suppose that the saints in glory are to be destitute of the affections and of sympathy—that they shall be less humane than the children of perdition? Have you not read also how that great preacher of righteousness, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God in all things, who, when his ministry here had its sorrowful ending on the cross, he having suffered for other's sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them unto God, went also after he had risen from the dead and preached unto the spirits in prison, to those who on earth rejected the ministry of Noah? Going into glory the Saviour did not forget the disobedient and the sinful—the lost, why should the saints forget them? Indeed what is there to lead us to believe in such loss of humanity, what indeed but the coarsest selfishness and brutality could thus banish our human affections? Would you be the husband to say AMEN to the damnation of your wife? Would you be the father to shout HALLE-LUJAH upon the passing of such sentence on your child? Or, am I to understand that the saints

will *merely forget* their friends? Will they be so absorbed in the joys of heaven as to forget altogether, parents and children, and husbands and wives forever lost in perdition? The pious Catholic, looking towards Purgatory, sings;

“To the dim regions
Where dear ones mourn
Love and religion
Bid us oft turn.”

Would you as a Protestant, looking toward Perdition, do less than this? Would any of the righteous dead do less than this?

A native of India, about to receive baptism of a Christian Missionary, asked if the heaven toward which this rite was in the way, was the place where his ancestors and other dear friends who had left the world were dwelling. Upon being told that these were in hell, he refused baptism, preferring to be with his own though in torment. Are we to suppose that Christians have less feeling for their friends than the heathen?

Here in this world, the good lavish their tenderness, their love, their sympathy, and their pity on the erring and the sinful, is there then, we would reverently ask, any difficulty in supposing the wish of the good in heaven other than it is on earth? The goodly company of apostles, saints, and martyrs, thought not much to bear with their divine Lord the burden of human transgressions and of human sorrow—to be accursed for their brethren's sake, will they not

count sympathy and love a fitting sacrifice in the world to come? Here love and sympathy toil on—often to fail—often to be harshly rebuked or turned back, but to love more and to give more sympathy—to find their only joy in the pursuit of the erring and the lost, so may it not be hereafter?

“It ought not to be, and will not be difficult for any humane Christian mind to imagine the blessed, urged by an irresistible Christ-like tenderness and pity and love, lavishing upon the lost, even if it be to no purpose, their tenderness and pity and love; pleading, wrestling, agonizing with them, to win them from the outer darkness of their selfishness and alienation to the eternal light and eternal love in Christ and God.”

While it is indeed a thought upon which we love to dwell, the burden of our ministry, that those who live righteous lives on earth shall hear the greeting of the Father, “Well done good and faithful servants,” in another and better world, and that theirs shall be the company of the wise and just among men, and of angels and spirits made perfect, yet a thought of far deeper satisfaction comes to me in the opportunity for reform and culture that will be given there to those who had only temptation and evil here—who were without the light which would alone enable them to apprehend the higher life. I am indeed glad to know that the good of earth will find a sainted

companionship in heaven, that they will have the awards due their high attainments in spirituality, but it is a joy infinitely greater for me to know that sinners will there find the Saviour, and that those who fall away from God in the earthliness of the present life will hear his voice calling them in the stillness of Eternity. There has come to me a thrill of delight as if out of the immensity of being, as I have thought of the ineffable purity of the angels in their high and holy estate, and what it would be for me to be associated with them, and yet this thought has not held me as the nearer one, that if a child of mine should pass from my care and training, good as I could make these, to a life of wilful persistent sin and then die impenitent, that I might follow it in the world beyond time with a new ministry of love, until I should win it back to myself and redeem it to God.

"They sin who tell us Love can die."

VI.

To the "Seventy-four Clergymen who think there has been no departure of consequence within their observation" from the old belief in hell.

You affirm that there has been no change in the belief about hell. Permit me, however, to ask how you would write your belief to-day. In a certain catechism I read, "The punishment of

sin in the world to come, is most grievous torments in both soul and body without intermission, in hell-fire forever." This was written years ago, would you so write to-day? Would you still write "both soul and body?"

Isaac Ambrose says: "The damned shall be packed like brick in a kiln, and be so bound that they cannot move a limb, nor even the eyelid; and while thus fixed, the Almighty shall blow the fires of hell through them forever." Would you so write? Is this the truth about hell? What Christian but revolts at human cruelty? What thought have we of the Inquisition? What of the old time prison discipline? What of the New Jersey state prison? What thought can we have of a God who would confine his own children through endless days in the fiery prison of hell, who would bind them, even to the eyelids, and blow the fires of hell through them?

Bishop Taylor says: "We are amazed to think of the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull; this was joy in respect to that fire of hell, which penetrates the very entrails of the body without consuming them." Would you so write? Could you so write without amazement at a God who would make such a hell for the torture of his children? Writing this, could you ever again write "He is a God of Love?"

10

ÆRÆ: A POEM.

BY

GEO. WILHELM SKINNER.

©

Æ R Æ:

A

POEM,

FIRST PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE WEST NEWBURY LYCEUM,
FEBRUARY 19, 1852.

BY

GEO. WILHELM SKINNER.

BOSTON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

M DCCCLII.

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GEO. WILHELM SKINNER,
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THURSTON, TORRY, AND EMERSON, PRINTERS.

**TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
WEST NEWBURY LYCEUM,**

This Poem

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

**BEFORE WHOM IT WAS FIRST PRONOUNCED, AND AT WHOSE
REQUEST IT IS NOW GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC
IN PAMPHLET FORM.**

THE AUTHOR.

1863, May 12.
Gift of
F. A. T. O. Seeds,
of Cambridgeport:
Class of 1865.

P O E M.

IN olden time, in golden legend days,
When airy sylphids danced their song of praise
In every sunbeam on the sidling hill ;
In every moon-beam mirrored in the rill ;
When brook, and shady glen, and deep alcove,
Were peopled with those tiny gods of love,
That in these later times, have fled to heaven,
As by man's erring superstition driven
Up to those blest abodes, whence first they came,
On holy missions, full of love's blest flame ;
(To do us good, and this their only fame,)
In time, now folded in the misty shroud,
That mantles past and future like a cloud ;
From vision, shutting out the apex high
Of that vast chain of life, which Deity,
In ancient time began, which now we see,
And ever feel a stern reality ; —

In time when man was not, and earth's fair form
Was rudely tossed by geologic storm ;
When mountains issued by volcanic force,
And earthquakes bellowed in their nether course ;
Their sputa casting to both earth and sea —
Of change on change, a certain prophecy !

In time remoter still — ere earth had form,
Or ere had raged the geologic storm ;
Ere earth and moon, or sun, or twinkling star,
Had reached their destined place in ether far ;
Ere time began, as we its numbers know,
Or by the roll of years its passing show ;
From the deep vista of eternity,
To whence the mind is impotent to fly,
Far back in dreamlike visions of the past,
And catches glimpses all too light to last,
Of what then was, or had been, long before,
When time's first ripples broke along the shore
Of periods unknown to human lore, —
Thence all was Deity, — we know no more !

The mind may, on its mental pinions, fly
To those far distant epochs, and descry

Events, long buried 'neath the past of years,
Whose requiem was the song of rolling spheres,
When, in their young and jubilant career,
They first made melody from sphere to sphere,
And yet still more,—the mind spell-bound with
 awe,

May read, in Nature's calm majestic law,
The surety of changes ever rife,
In Nature's endless, changeful, changeless life;
Aye, more! in that majestic law we find
The certain record of Deity's mind,
Of states of being which the future holds,
Safely concealed within its mystic folds,
Safe from our vision, or our faith's fond gaze.
We know but little in our best estate,
But know we must, that much is bound in fate.
The mind may roam through boundless ether
 space,

And through the past and future run its race;
But who can tell us sure whence Time began,
Or when and where will end its mighty span?
Or where in space a centre may be found?
Or where the wall that forms its utmost bound?
How large that centre, and how high that wall?
Sure these are questions that must shame us all!

There are some few, however, who can tell,
How long the time since "Father Adam" fell.
About six thousand years, they gravely say,
In their majestic roll, have passed away,
Since Astral System, Central Sun, and Star
All reached their destined place in ether far.
And since the tree, of knowledge good and evil,
Was palmed on woman by the snakish Devil.
And this, 'tis said, (its truth who dare deny ?)
Graced Eden's bower six thousand years ago —
And that was time's first dawn — it may be so !
But where was Time, ere solar sun or sphere
Marked off its space, as minute, day or year ?
Such time there was : from thence my song begins ;
Commencing thence, of change on change it sings ;
Ere man was born, and still beyond it goes,
With man as now he is, the muse shall close.

Inspiring Genii of the Dorian lyre,
Thy music lend, the plodding theme inspire !
Thy power oft couched in flowing, jingling rhyme,
Hath sped full oft the stealing hours of time —
For thou hast power to spell the willing mind,
Which duller, plodding prose may never find.

Come, then, O gentle Muse, my theme inspire,
And touch my word of song with living fire!
O! breathe thy music to both tongue and ear;
O! light the realms of space, which else were
drear;
And help our gaze, as by us epochs fly,
In the dim vista of eternity!
Thy soft'ning inspiration breathe o'er all;
And on each heart, O! let thy magic fall,
And teach dull care a moment to begone,
And passion's place make desolate and lone!

Prepare, by thy mild power, the mind to fly,
Far, far away from all of earth and sky;
Touch with thy wand the mind, and help it scan
The wide, unbounded sphere of nature's plan;
A plan deep fraught with mystery — a plan
Commence where'er it may, still ends in Man.

Through simple motions and through life it runs,
From forming dew-drops up to central suns;
It passes thence, through elemental strife,
Through lower forms of vegetative life;
From moss to fern, from fern to stately tree —
In floral life progressive forms we see.

In fossil floras, this is well defined,—
To massive Cryptogamic forms confined ;
No stately oak, or branching elm is there,
No higher fruit-tree is imprisoned there ;
The forms that in the fossil coal do rise,
Are huge club-mosses, ferns of stately size ;
Confined to these, of lowest floral form,
The ancient geologic eras swarm.
As yet no higher type of floral life,
No petalled flower, which now in spring so rife,
Bedeck the sloping lawn, or meadow green,
And give a varied beauty to the scene ;
No higher form of life those eras knew,
Progressive life has added floras new.

And onward still, through life's ascending type,
Whose lowest Fauna yields a harvest ripe,
This plan of Nature, still progressive flies,
As well marked grades of being upward rise,
Till all is perfect and complete in Man —
A microcosm he, of Nature's plan !
And in the language of the Russian hymn,
“ The chain of being is complete in him, —
In him the last of matter do we see,
And the next step is Spirit — Deity ! ”

“Who made the stars?” a prattling child did ask;
To answer which, would seem no weighty task;
’T was God who made them, every one replies,
And with this answer all inquiry dies.

“How made He them, how placed He them on high,
To twinkle ever in the cloudless sky?”

That question how, hath driven many mad;
And some poor souls, who feel so very bad
For fallen man, in that one question see
A certain sign of his apostasy!

Alas! the dire effects of Eden’s tree
Inspires us thus to unsealed mystery;
But no complaint from human lips should fall,
For Eve the passion had, and we now all
But feel the law of ancestral descent
Where sin is down to generations sent.

From her this prying, quizzing, spirit came—
The source of sin, of every kind and name;
For all believe, that had she spurned the apple,
We all with sin had ne’er been doomed to grapple.

But still the question comes, “How made He stars,
How regulate the elemental wars?”

O! let us pass, through space, extended far,—
Far, far beyond the realm of twinkling star;

Millions of spheres, roll onward in their course,
Singing their melody, bass-like and hoarse ;
And as we pass these mighty, rolling spheres,
Thus moving ever in their endless years ;
And stationed there in space, there by us fly,
Myriads of suns, (the stars we see on high,)
Aye ! travel onward thence forever — still,
No sum of systems can the ether fill ;
And fancy, tiring, falters in her flight,
Nor can its vision grasp, within its sight,
The whole of matter, space, or beings high —
Yet all exists in perfect harmony !

How this ? The chained admirer seeks reply,
Which answer is the voice of Deity ;
For He who spake to life, all motion, law,
In their calm working, will permit no flaw.
Nature, all is perfect, from globule up to sun ;¹
It knows but sameness, knows no many and no one.
The law that moulds the rounded tear in childhood's
eye,
Fashioned the countless worlds of vast infinity.
The law, that whirls two eddies on the river's face,
And makes those tiny, whirling couplets run their
race,

Vieing with each other, in distance just so nigh,
Keeps astral spheres at proper distances on high,
And moves the worlds of space in perfect harmony;
For Nature's law doth recognize no great, no small,
But, infinite in scope and power, it reacheth all!

All space above, beneath, on either side,
Where endless flows the astronomic tide
Of worlds on worlds ; where, endless, ever rise
Systems on systems, far beyond our skies ;
This boundless space, now studded thick with
spheres,
Which now have moved, for almost endless years ;
This space hath been, when neither sun nor star
Had form or being in its distance far.
But matter, now of planetary form,
Was once as vapor, void, and without form ;
Worlds then were not, and those which now we
see,
As subtle gas, quite filled immensity.

A mandate issued from the eternal will
Of Him, whose presence all of space doth fill ;
Motion was born, and in that mass diffused,
Prophetic, elemental life was fused ;

Vast bodies then assumed the form of sphere ;
Attraction, then, as now, drew atoms near ;
Repulsion then was born, with all its power ;
Which forces live, e'en in the present hour.
They live alas ! but not to space confined ;
We see their influence here, 'twixt mind and mind.

Thus primal spheres were formed ; each in its place,
With some huge neighbor, then commenced a race.
From off their surfaces, they oft did fling
A yielding, molten belt, like Saturn's ring ;
And when they broke from some disturbing force,
Attendant moons began their lunar course,²

No mind can scan the mighty sum of years,
Since thus was formed the first of rolling spheres ;
Yet Astronomic voice, doth clearly say,
That matter, *as the "Zodiacal ray,"*
Hath not *all* found its final form or place,
But, unembodied, still exists in space.

But leaving other worlds, which shine above,
And in their orbits, calm, forever move,
We come to Earth, so meagre, and so small,
That when compared to suns, — a darkling ball, —

A speck it scarcely seems, midst worlds on high,
Though bound to them by astronomic tie!

What book can now the needed data show,
By which we can the Earth's deep history know?
Yet Earth has had a life, in ages gone,—
Where else those records left, save in its stone?
For man had not a being on the earth,
When geologic epochs had their birth.
“Lead in the solid rock,” those records are,
To know them rightly, we must read them there;
And there are seen some traces of the plan,
Which finds its earthly terminus in Man!

For Man in all his thoughts, one thing we claim,
That Truth with all is motive, end, and aim;
But Truth is e'er the voice of Him on high,
Who all in common know as Deity.
That voice of God to man is ever still the same,
Though known by many a varied source or name;
Within itself, Truth knows no vacillating change;
No new developments can e'er its facts derange.
’Tis in the mind of man that Truth's oft changes
lie,
For there exists the secret of the mystery

So puzzling and so strange, which all do often see,
 Of truths to errors changed, by man's sagacity!
 'T is all deceitful mock, we must sincerely say,
 Though change we still our faith through each
 successive day,
 And thus this farce admit, unwittingly, forsooth,
 And form a truthful fact, though not a fact of truth.

One thing is clear, whatever else we say,
 Think as we will, believe as chance we may,
 We all see Truth, each in a stated way
 As much our own, as form of front or face,
 Or size of that which doth its centre grace,—
 Is all our own, peculiar, and unique,
 Marking the space between our either cheek.

Can will, though powerful in its mental might,
 Change frontal form, or length of focal sight,
 Or add a single cubit to our height?
 Or has a fate, beyond our will's control,
 Moulded the state of body and of soul?
 And fixed the latter's form, capacity,
 To certain bounds, which none can change or flee?
 Can all be Bacons, Byrons, at their will?
 Alas! 't is true, we all are fated still.

This being thus, I feel at perfect ease,
Not even dreaming all your minds to please ;
But stating truth, as I its teachings see,
The rest I leave, and beg your charity.

Let thought to ages past on mental pinions fly,
Ere fleeting Time was born from out Eternity.

Our Earth, a molten liquid mass of rounded form,
Was then a scene of burning calorific storm ;
Its cooling surface then assumed metallic form,
And primal “ granite gray,” a pure crystalic stone,
Composed its forming surface crust through every
zone.

Granitic rock, the first of geologic birth,
Can claim just parentage to all of mother earth ;
For all the future strata, known by every name,
From gases and from this primeval stratum came.

Progressive motion, though itself a mystery,
Was acting still to form the earth, its soils and sea ;
Here forming limpid water — sparkling and so pure,
From elements, confined to solid rock before ;³

Here forming vapor, air, and subtle gas refined,
Of source mysterious, and scarcely known to
mind;

Here forming deltas vast, from floating silt or sand,
Composing earths and soils, now known by name
of land;

Then raising mountain range, as Alp or Apenine,
Which now in after ages girt the visual line.

Through geologic times we thus progressive fly,
And in a few brief lines condense the history
Of age succeeding age, with all their changes vast,
And sing of motions, laws, whose power will ever
last.

Through all these changes in our planet's crust,
Think as we may, one fact admit we must,
That life progressive, increasing in its span,
Though first of lower forms, finds bound in man.
In lower Slate, or Lime-stone rock, the fossils are,
Of encrinital forms, and Polyparia;
Ascending thence from those, we find the Crus-
tacea,
And next, the mongrel forms of Fish appear;

Which, in the era of the “Old Red Sand-stone,”
grew
To size enormous, though of form and species
few;
Their form was mean, their scale of being low,
As all their fossils do most clearly show.
Reptilian life comes next, in nature’s scale,
With mark of fish in sloping form and tail,
And reptile foot, and lungs, the air to inhale;
Thus fitted for a life in marshy land,
In bogs and swamps, composed of silt and sand.
Next comes the Bird, of form and plumage fair,
To pass its life on wing in upper air;
Then come Marsupials, to make the chain com-
plete,
’Twixt birds of two, and mammals of four feet.
The Simia next appears in life’s progressive plan;
And close succeeding Monkey, comes the species,
Man,—
Which, but for caudal want, we might most surely
say,
Too oft resembles him in mind’s capacity!
A sage philosophy hath here a link espied,
By which the monkey tribe is still to man allied;

For in the lapse of time, (it doth most gravely say,)
 The monk, by sitting much, hath worn his tail
 away.

Alas for man's estate, if this his only claim !
 Were chairs not very cheap his lot were still the
 same.

No Delphian muse need sing, to make *Man's* pro-
 gress plain,

Nor needs it sage defence, in prose or lyric strain ;
 For all *his* progress know — his germ, maternity —
 His slow advancing growth, through puling in-
 fancy —

Through sunny childhood hours — through gay
 and blooming youth,

When innocence of heart thinks life a happy truth ;
 We watch his progress still, through manhood till
 his death,

And only part with him as he parts with his breath ;
 While faith still follows to his "higher spheres,"
 And sees him there advance through never-ending
 years !

* * * * *

O'er life's progressive plan
 We thus have swiftly run ;
 Arriving thence at man
 Our journey half is done ;

Long ages have we passed in less than one brief hour;

To compress years in seconds, is mind's peculiar power!

And leaving now the scenes of past infinity,
The present state of man, our closing theme shall be.

The Muse here tiring, falters in her weary flight,
The task is far too great, though struggling in its might,—

“The present state of Man :” at this Apollo grieves,
And begs an audience for the excuse he leaves.

Though on the Orphic lyre, in flight of poesy,
All men expect of rhyme, in measure sweet and free,
All thoughts and images, all fancies of the mind,
Expressed by phrases soft, in metre well defined ;
Yet here the muse hath text on which to amplify,
That sets at naught its grace, and all its powers
defy !

“ The lot of fallen man, as now his state we see ”—
A theme, we wot, that almost puzzles Deity ;
Yet with assisting grace from Phœbus’ ample might,
We ask for patience, while we climb Parnassus’
height,

And for a brief half hour beguile your fleeting time,
And trust the theme may please, if not the muse's
rhyme!

—
Then hail ! inspiring theme, so oft by wits dis-
cussed —

Which pseudo poets sing, and on our notice thrust,
In lays, so touching sweet, in words so well defined,
That one would almost think that man were not
mankind,

But changed to angel type, had cast his former
state,

And hating still his sin, had ceased mankind to hate ;
For truthful critics say, to hate the man is wrong,
To hate his sin is virtue — praised in every song.

We sing the present time, the dreamer's golden age,
When Woman's precious time no household cares
engage,

But freed from sordid ties, from delving duties free,
The forum boldly takes, and pleads for liberty ;
And spurns the binding fetters of domestic life,
And blots from lexicon that good old name of wife,
And equal—equal—she there scribbles in its stead,
As to making, eating, but not in earning, bread.

Ah ! there, she thoughtless, to a blazing passion flies,
And hears her doom pronounced, each time her
 baby cries.

Alas ! for woman's lot, when thus she views her
 fate,

And passes o'er the line, that bounds the married
 state ;

Without her passport, love, whene'er she enters
 there,

She must expect to be a sorry prisoner.

'T is there she 's only free when bound in chains of
 love ;

'T was thus by Nature planned — by Him who
 dwells above ;

And in one single line, her wrongs are all defined—
By marriage joined to man, of not a suited mind.
She must secure her rights, in lover — not from
 State ;

If not secured from thence, she seals her certain
 fate !

The Muse next calls on Man, the lord of earth and
 woman,

A being, strangely made, yet evidently human ;

We pass him in review, to see his front and build,
And bare the false ensigns which now his motives
gild.

Within the pale secure, of calm domestic life,
We first will view him there as husband of a wife.

“ I am the only lord, I here would have you know; ”
And thus, by words profound, his better half would
show.

“ I am your master now, ’tis I must give the word;
Your place is to obey your rightful, legal lord ;
My peace is all my own—and yours is also mine—
’T is yours to serve my will,— I thus am only thine! ”

When man assumes this right and lords it to his
will,

What loving, soothing sounds from off their tongues
distil!

Their words are symphonies — but like a music
chime,

When all is out of tune and worse than out of
time ;

The bass is grating hoarse — soprano shrill and
high,

And discord rules as queen, in place of harmony.

A petty tyrant Man, he boasts of manly power,
Which all may 'scape his trust in space of single
hour,—

Like lord of princely throne, who trusts to sword
and shield,

And many victories won upon the battle-field;
The people are his power, but when they rise and
say,

“We will no longer have your stern, despotic
sway,”

His wealth, his power gone, he then is only one,
His loss he sadly feels, the people like the fun.
So with the despot man, in pale of wedded life,—
Where all his right to rule, if sternly says his wife,
No! you are *my* equal, and I am also yours,
And we are *one*, only while this plain rule endures.

Hail, glorious age! Conventions now of women
Can meet, their rights to plead against the lordly
men;
When men, too, know their rights, but not to meet-
ings go,
But take some private scene, their eloquence to
show.

Alas! for man's estate, for woman's also, too,
'T were for their equal good, were all such meetings
few.

We all this truth may know, that woman's rights
do lie

Deep down at base of all life's social mystery.
Let woman know her power, she guides our certain
fate
By her deep love, as statesman helms the ship of
state.

Hail! theme of equal rights, let all your praise ex-
claim,

But some particulars we would most humbly
name.

Shall woman lay the keel, or mast the stately ship?
Woman, the "Man of War," which other Navies
whip?

Or shall she swing the axe to lay the forest low?

Or on the foaming sea to other nations go?

While strong and sturdy man, of firm and power-
ful arm,

Makes dresses, cakes, and pies, and keeps the chil-
dren warm?

If these the rights she claims, our nation's "stripes
and stars"

Had never conquered in her hard and well fought
wars;

If these the rights she claims, then yield her axe
and plane,

And let her not again of social wrong complain.

Still, woman has her rights, too often sadly so,
And would the muse had power, those rights to
clearly show.

'Tis hers to delve a slave, from morn till late at
night,

Incessant in her toil to serve our appetite;

'Tis hers to weep alone, while he who should be
near,

Enjoys some royal scene, with friends in festive
cheer;

'Tis hers to meekly bear, and be a willing slave
To passion's private sphere—she no reprieve can
have;

'Tis hers to learn this truth, and only know that
life

To her, as woman, speaks of housemaid, mother,
wife.

These duties, three, alas! too often are her fate,
And make the sum complete of all her married
state.

Progression crowns us still, with blessings all un-
told,

And leads her votaries on to realms of yellow gold.
And see, what deadly strife to reach that famous
land,

Where few may find the gold, but most do find the
sand.

Then California, hail! we sing of thee and thine,
A trite yet varied text, of mirth a golden mine.
Come then, inspiring theme, delight us while you
may,

For all thy golden dreams, like dreams, must pass
away!

The first that seeks your clime, in search of princely
wealth,

Finds gold enough, perchance, but loses all his
health.

He sighs for home again, the friends he left behind,
Who used his life to cheer, by words and actions
kind;

He quickly spends his purse, and then his friends
are gone,

And thus he's left to die, uncared for and alone.

The next, a manly youth, desires his chance to
try,

Risks all on fortune's wheel — a fatal lottery.

With heart all full of glee, he bids his love adieu,
To seek her good and his, 'mid scenes and duties
new.

They give the last farewell, and part with many
tears,

While hope beguiles the heart with thoughts of
coming years;

Those after years may come, but he may silently
Be resting 'neath the deep, the ever rolling sea;
While she of plighted faith, may lose love's wan-
ing flame,

And soon forget it all, by changing of her name.

Some few may chance return, and bless the happy
day,

That took them from their friends to distant lands
away;

Some fewer still there be, who wish again to try,
Their fate in golden lands, and trust to destiny.
Then California, hail! thou oft inspiring theme,
To most, thy promises are all a baseless dream!
Yet one plain truth is here most perfectly defined,
A truth deep riveted in every candid mind,—
That he who sternly wills, and sternly seeks for
gold,
May, in New England clime, find stores of wealth
untold;
That such need never sail for California,
To them the golden mines are scattered every
where.

Let Christian hearts rejoice,—the time at last has
come,
Prophetic of a day, a good millennium,
When all can Christians be without much faith or
cost,
And by a few slight acts escape the fate of—lost!

The gods are very kind within the past few years,
And souls are “born again” with few repentant
tears.

To hear one good revivalist, of sing-song tone,
To feel slight twinges, few, while in the anxious
seat,—

Such simple acts will now for all past sins atone,
And ('tis believed) will full demand of duty meet.

A happy age is this, when all can Christians be,
And thereby *gain* in wealth and popularity.
No sacrifice of time or means is now desired ;
Assent, when creed is read, is all that is required.
The individual, then, is safe, whate'er may come,
And straight, without regret, may go to selling
rum;

And of his fellow-men can willing drunkards make,
Which, from his right to heaven, no single whit
will take.

While member of the church, he's safe in keeping
slaves ;
The wealth the traffic brings is what he deeply
craves ;
. And if there be a wrong in human slavery,
He can that wrong atone by acts of charity.
A princely gift to church, for Christian purposes,
Will answer all the ends, though got by breeding
slaves !

We will admit such sins, and lighter ones, by far,
Are bad enough, at best, and would from heaven
debar;
But, thanks to modern creeds,— the man in church
secure
Can deal in rum and slaves, and still be Christian
pure.
Such painful facts, alas! are burlesque on the
name
Of Him, who once to earth on love's blest mission
came;
To call a church, or men, who tolerate such crimes,
By name of Christian, is in keeping with the
times!

Well may we sing in praise of our poetic time,
When Phœbus is invoked too oft in murdered
rhyme,
To celebrate in verse the virtues of a “pill,”
Whose healing excellence can all diseases kill ;
When all “hair oils,” and shabby half-made clo’es,
Are advertised in strains unfit for common prose.
When Poets may be born by one ecstatic pang,
And grace Apollo’s muse with ditties sweetly sang,

Which each week's kind return full on the world
may launch,
Not from the Delphic shades,—but in the “Olive
Branch.”

The ancient Myths declare, that on Parnassus'
height

Nine Muses used to dwell, to them a sacred right;
But now intruding bards their limping bantlings
bring,

And to the spell-bound maids their inspirations sing.
Alas! the Muses weep, that those who seek the
shade

Of Sylphic deity, should thus their fame degrade;
Should make such grating discord on the Orphic
lyre,

And though unborn to sing, should thus to song
aspire;

And wanting other theme, and feelings more be-
nign,

Should dedicate their muse in kindly Valentine!

Alas, for Homer, Horace, and Minerva too!

Their fame were greater far, were all such poets
few.

Hail, age of Avarice! when all are seeking wealth
By just and honest means, or by dishonest stealth;
The wordy demagogue will plead night after night,
That his dear party is the only one that's right;
He's thinking of the pay, if all the truth were told;
For creed he cares but slight, he'll sell it oft for
gold.

The tradesman will declare his goods as very cheap,
And thinks thereby to gain, and larger profits reap.
The briefless barrister, who does the needful need,
Will stifle conscience's voice, and for the wrong
will plead,

In case he for the plea receives substantial aid,
And for the loss of peace can count the “dollars
made!”

Ha! to any lawyer go, to Christian lawyers too—
Report however says that such are very few—
But still, if in the wrong you find yourself to be,
And an attorney need to make for you a plea,—
To any lawyer go, and in plain words, forsooth,
Tell him the case outright, keep nothing of the
truth.

He sees you have the wrong, he tells you what
to do,
And for a paltry fee will pledge to lie for you;

He there will plead your rights with all apparent
grace,

And twist and turn the facts to gain for you the
case.

Such are the tricks of law; and still they gravely
say,

In their defence of law, there is no other way!
They'd scorn the paltry bribe, or any offered fee,
As private men,— but, while in law's capacity,
The purest can be bought by the “almighty dollar,”
But that 'tis sin or wrong, they say “it does not
foller!”

Alas! can Jove himself the mighty contrast span,
Betwixt a man of law and truly loyal man!

And even Ministers, of Christian graces pure,
Who cast the world aside,— whom gold cannot
allure,—

They often hear the voice of duty, (so they say,)
Which calls them from their flock, to other church,
away.

Their God thus speaks to them, 'tis now declared
by all,

But Mammon's deity e'er gives the loudest call;

At least one thing is plain, which all can clearly
see,

That duty ever sides with increased salary.

The gods have plainly said, in forming man's estate,
That chains were needed here to poise his mental
state;

For he that would do good, must first the means
acquire,

And he that would be great, must step by step
aspire.

Yet wealth is never worth,—'tis here the evil lies,
We often crouch to wealth, as oft the man despise.
The man is still a man, God's noblest work is he,
Though of the poorest garb, and thralled by penury;
And if the world be safe from turning all to gold,
To form the golden age, so oft in song foretold,
'Tis in the fact, that man is judged by "mental
worth,"

And not by hoarded wealth, by princely rank or
birth.

'Tis wealth that builds the ship, and breasts the
foaming wave,
Bears messengers of peace, the heathen lands to
save;

'Tis wealth that fills the hand of flowing charity,
And gives the soul of love a true philanthropy ;
'Tis wealth inspires to war, that relic of the past,
Whose hellish, murderous reign, God grant be
nearly past ;

'Tis wealth *alone* that charms in human slavery —
Our nation's deepest sin — "the sum of villany,"
Whose voice will ere long reach the seat of Him on
high,

Whose throne's insignia is, Justice — Equity !

Wealth sings a syren song, that charms the miser's
ear,

Who nameless thousands has, yet lives in constant
fear ;

Wealth soothes the widowed heart, who steady,
patiently,

For twelve pence stitches on, the weary, live-long
day ;

And plies the needle still, through all the dreary
night,

And smiles with thankfulness, to gain the paltry
mite.

Enough is all we want of this world's fleeting store,
And blest the stoic mind, that of it wants no more.

Hail to the present time, the dreamer's golden age,
Reformers now are rife, in fact they're all the rage;
But still it stands confess, we do most sorely need
Reformed reformers—men who can our leaders lead.

Our home of liberty—"land of the free, the brave,"
Whose banner proudly floats o'er every ocean's
wave!

Alas! our land enslaves three millions of her sons,
In many of whose veins the Anglo-Saxon current
runs.

Europa's tyrants laugh, and let them laugh we say,
Their day of grace will end, when ends "our
slavery;"

A day not distant far, for Kossuth is alive,
And Hungary's right, aye, Europe's, all in him live.
"Then cease thy doubts and fears, O! faithless one,
Nor think that right has fallen ne'er to rise again.
Clouds may hide at times the genial sun,
Yet they but yield the melting rain
Which vivifies the earth, and makes the verdant
plain

To teem with flowrets fair. What though the chain
Of Tyranny be forged anew, and right,
And justice, crushed to earth by kingly power,
Seem lost to man, though struggling in his might,—

Fear not: as ere the wheel of fortune whirls its round,
Soon, right soon, will come the gladsome hour,
When tyrants, despots, hurled prostrate to the ground,
Shall cease to rule;—and man will then be free—
Free as one vast brotherhood in peace and liberty.”⁵

We have reforms in life, in church, in state, in mind,
And socialistic schemes to socialize mankind,
And harmonize their state on sordid base of money.
(If men can thus be saved, 't were certainly funny,
For all their strifes and wars from love of money
rise,
The source of private and of nation's jealousies.)
We must confess the heart and genius of the man,
Whose inspiration schemed the socialistic plan,
To save the fallen race from want and poverty,
And heal the dire effects of squalid penury;
But men will still be men, and spurn the force and rule
Of law of Church or State, much more a “Fourier School.”

No mind has ever risen of teachings nigh so pure,
 Or maxims, social laws, by which our wrongs to
 cure,

As Him of Orient birth, who taught on Judea's plain,
 "Love nobly well thyself; thy neighbor love the
 same."

This law obeyed by man, all social sin and wrong
 Would live in history, but vanish "in a song."

Improvement, glorious theme! the Muse but feebly
 sings

The nameless benefits its constant presence brings.
 Mechanics, artizans, in this do all agree,
 That progress on the past each day gains victory.

In creeds alone, the past had all of perfectness ;
 Their doctrines never change, though changed their
 verbal dress !

While steam supplants the horse, and lightning
 cheats the mail,

(At which improvements all Hunkerdom should
 quail;

At which conservatives should tremble for their fate,
 Lest progress shame them all, as well in Church as
 State ;)

While some mechanic, in his studio confined,
Builds fancy water-wheels, and turns them in his
mind
By some deep river's power, or strength of babbling
rill;
And thus in mind constructs, perhaps, a "cotton
mill."
When the Astronomer, much puzzled by his facts,
Most plainly sees his problem accuracy lacks;
And conning still his mind, at last a planet finds,
And tells its place within our solar sphere's con-
fines;
Then points his glass, and lo! here therec detects the
cause,
That in his pesky reckonings e'er made so many
flaws!
And thus discovered, first in this strange brain of
man,
LE VERRIER's planet rolls as when it first began.

The battle of the times is being bravely fought;
The **ARMS** are curious, and curiously brought
To bear on enemy; the arms' report are, too,
As curious as themselves, of sound as strangely
new.

The ammunition's gained by delving 'mong the rocks,

Where rents, seams, upheavings bear mark of earthquake shocks;

Where geologic strata each o'er the other rise,
Till mountains lift their heads, to kiss the ambient skies.

Two Generals command and guide the marshalled host,

(Leaders reliable, and ever at their post,)

The one with TELESCOPE o'erlooks the outmost van,
The other's MICROSCOPE, the point where life began!
And thus the battle's given, and loud the ordnance roars,

And loudly shout the facts arranged by Nature's laws —

"Death to all false creeds, of nature or of men,"

Which death flows black and fast from off the flowing pen.

And O! what dreadful death the pen and ideas wield

Upon the mimic ground of paper battle-field !

To hear the dying groans of gasping faith or creed;
(These sounds are common now, they no description need)

To see the weapons used in this amusing fight,
By sage conservatives, to breast advancing light,—
Jest, falsehood, ridicule, and the “almighty dollar,”
Deceiver, humbug, gracious heavens! what more
need foller?

Infidel, who lacks in faith, or else believes too much,
In spirits or in faiths, not “canonized by church.”
Alas! suit them if you can: there’s only just one
way,—

Think just as they think and wish, and all their
rules obey!

Such are the weapons used, most weighty are they
too,

Though none can call them just, or just exactly new;
They scent of “Smithfield,” dungeons, prisons, or
the stake;

Of holy, sainted “MATHER,” who made the Quakers
quake

And tremble for their fate, as flying on their track,
He used the cat-o’nine tail soundly on their back!

Thank Heaven! that day has passed, the lash can
never more

Cut flesh of maiden down on Salisbury shore!

Or drive defenceless women from their homes away,
Forsooth, because they would their Quaker homage
pay.

But “MATHER” now is dead, and may we evermore
Have ministers, who will such arguments ignore.

The lyre must cease its strain, nor thus its theme
prolong,

For prose is bad enough, much worse a prosy song;
And lest your patience tire of theme or manner
terse,

The Muse will no more sing in plain “Iambic”
verse;

Which though of graceful strength, of calm majestic
might,

Is yet too ornate far for true poetic flight.

Then cease this lyric strain in measure, flowing,
free,

By stanza to the past, present, and futurity.

Then hail! to the shades of the Ages that have
been,

And the changes so vast which their passing hath
seen;

They've witnessed the birth of magnificent spheres,
Which now have been moving for endless years ;
They were present in the morn when creation
began ;

They have witnessed its progress through an end-
less span ;

They sang at the birth of the planets afar,
Which have never been seen as twinkling star ;
They sang at the birth of our own solar sphere,
And still note each return of its astral year ;
They sang, too, when Earth and fair Cynthia was
born ;

They witnessed the nuptials in Eden's blest morn ;
They have brought us in gladness, through changes,
unknown,

But the death-god hath sealed them forever his
own !

All hail to the present, our own golden age !
Its destiny who knoweth ? What savan or sage
Can divine us its fate, its marvel unseal ?
Its mystery unravel, or its fortune reveal ?
The steam car now whistles, and the lightning now
flies,
The chained servant of man as it distance defies ;

And man's subtle mind, spread out on the river,
Makes it work like a giant, where ten thousand
 wheels quiver,
And thousands of spindles, thus constantly hum-
 ming,
Sing their song to the Age, of a "Good time com-
 ing;"
When the light-flowing pen gives battle to wrong,
Slaying ignorance like magic, in prose and in song.
Then hail to the present! improve its glad day;
For its moments are passing to oblivion for aye!

The dark vista of time, which now lies before us,
How it brightens and glows in the light of the
 past;
Till we long to embrace the glad prospect before
 us,
And curse in our memory all thoughts of the past.

But let us remember that past progress was slow,
That by dint of hard effort did its car only go;
That ages were passed ere its spindles could hum,
Or the mind's subtle thoughts through a printing-
 press come;

Even He, who from heaven our race came to save,
Had to die on the cross, and lay low in the grave.

And Earth has its wrongs which the future must
meet,

And valiantly conquer ere the victory is complete.
Then gird for the battle, the fast coming storm,—
Laying all on the altar of God and Reform.

N O T E S.

NOTE 1. P. 12.

THE reader will perceive that, though this poem is written in Iambic verse, part is of Pentametrical and part of Hexametrical feet. Suffice it to say, that, had it been first written with a view to publication, that fault, and some others of perhaps a more serious nature, would not have been allowed.

NOTE 2. P. 14.

“And when they broke, from some disturbing force,” &c.

The sentiment contained in these lines is thus stated; but whether true or false, the critic must decide to suit his own fancy. This is not a place to argue the “developments of hypothesis.”

NOTE 3. P. 17.

“Here forming limpid water,” &c.

A fact is here generalized. The verse, in the space originally intended, will not admit of detail.

NOTE 4. P. 21.

“Yet here the *Muse hath text* on which to amplify,” &c.

“Not even that clown could amplify
On that trite text so long as I.”

Scott's Marmion.

NOTE 5. P. 39.

This irregular stanza was first published in September, 1849, on the Fall of Hungary, and the “Roman Triumvirate.”

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